

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS  
THAT INFLUENCE HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH TEACHERS'  
SENSE OF EFFICACY

BY

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by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTERS	
I BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Subject Area, Setting, and Participants.....	4
Research Design.....	9
Scope of the Study.....	11
Significance of the Study.....	12
Overview of Chapters.....	12
II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	14
Introduction.....	14
Sense of Efficacy.....	15
Teachers' Sense of Efficacy.....	21
The Context of Teaching.....	30
Concerns of Foreign Language Teachers.....	44
Summary.....	48
III METHODOLOGY.....	51
Introduction.....	51
Research Perspective.....	52
Research Method and Model.....	62
Methodological Issues.....	78
Summary.....	92
IV FINDINGS.....	93
Introduction.....	93
The Ecological Framework.....	93
Microsystem Factors.....	96
The Nature of Classes.....	96

The Nature of the Physical	
Setting.....	108
Teacher Role Definition.....	110
Discussion of Findings Regarding	
Microsystem Factors and	
Teachers' Sense of Efficacy.....	112
Mesosystem Factors.....	116
School Norms.....	117
School Relations.....	121
Decision-Making Structures.....	130
Discussion of Findings Regarding	
Mesosystem Factors and	
Teachers' Sense of Efficacy.....	134
Exosystem Factors.....	137
The Nature of the School District	
and State.....	138
The Nature of Education in the	
United States.....	149
Discussion of Exosystem Factors	
and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy.....	152
Macrosystem Factors.....	155
The Role of Foreign Language in	
American Education.....	155
The Nature of the Learner in	
Foreign Language Classrooms.....	159
Discussion of Macrosystem Factors	
and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy.....	165
V    CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	169
Introduction.....	169
Summary and Conclusions.....	169
Microsystem Factors.....	171
Mesosystem Factors.....	172
Exosystem Factors.....	172
Macrosystem Factors.....	172
Relationship of Findings to Previous	
Studies.....	174
Implications for the Research Community.....	176
Implications for Practitioners.....	179
Summary.....	183

REFERENCES.....	185
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#### APPENDICES

A    PROJECT OUTLINE.....	203
B    DATA COLLECTION ITEMS.....	205
C    DATA ANALYSIS ITEMS.....	216

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	220
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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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The purpose of this qualitative investigation was to identify, describe, and analyze contextual factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy by means of the ethnographic interview research method. Three guiding questions focused the study and provided a framework for devising interview questions:

1. How do high school Spanish teachers describe their workplace and teaching situation?
2. What are the contextual factors that high school Spanish teachers believe help and hinder their success in teaching in their current workplace and teaching situation?
3. How do high school Spanish teachers judge their capability to perform in their current positions?

In-depth interviews were conducted with the total population of 20 high school Spanish teachers of the six

high schools in a southeastern school district foreign language program. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed along with field notes. Archives were collected as aids in describing the context in which teachers taught.

Data analysis was an ongoing process based on an ethnographic research model developed by the researcher in a pilot study of basic skills teachers' sense of efficacy. The analysis revealed a taxonomy of contextual factors that were categorized and analyzed based on an ecological framework.

Teachers' sense of efficacy was qualitatively described by analyzing teachers' subjective accounts of their cognitive appraisals of and management strategies for dealing with problematic situations that had occurred in the context of teaching. It was found that factors in all four ecological systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) influenced teachers' sense of efficacy. Specifically, the contextual factors that teachers described as most important were collegial and principal support, class size, availability of classroom and resources, multilevel classes, teacher evaluation for merit pay, degree of lesson continuity, and job security.

This study confirmed the importance of the influence of the school environment, the status of the teaching profession, and sociocultural issues on teachers' sense of



efficacy. Results suggested that teachers' basic concerns must be addressed if they are to remain in the public schools and in the teaching profession.

## CHAPTER I BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Any problem of scientific inquiry that does not grow out of actual social conditions is factitious.

John Dewey, 1938, p. 499

### Statement of the Problem

This study was based on a current problem concerning the teaching profession in general and concerning high school foreign language teachers in one southeastern school district in particular--that of teachers' sense of efficacy, teachers' judgment of their capability to teach effectively in their current work settings. The climate in which teachers were teaching produced factors that influenced their sense of efficacy. This climate included not only the actual conditions of the workplace but also the sociocultural milieu of the community, state, and nation, and issues relevant to the teaching profession. Foreign language teachers had special concerns about their effectiveness as teachers based on the factors that arose in their teaching situations. Factors were termed contextual factors since they were described as situation-specific factors that had meaning in a specific context.

Sense of efficacy, a construct embedded in social learning theory (Bandura, 1977b), refers to an individual's judgment of her/his capability to perform a given task (Bandura, 1977a, 1982a, 1984). According to Bandura (1977a), sense of efficacy may operate as a determinant of behavior, because individual competence, incentives to perform, and cognitive self-appraisal of capability are interdependent. Teachers' sense of efficacy, a relatively recent construct in educational research, refers to teachers' judgment of their capability to perform in their teaching situation (Ashton & Webb, in press; Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Denham & Michael, 1981; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). This research documents that teachers' sense of efficacy is an important variable in effective teaching.

It is also substantially documented that the context of teaching influences effective teaching (Boyer, 1983; Duke, 1984; Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975;Sizer, 1984; Webb, 1981). The context of teaching is composed of the sociocultural milieu in which teachers work, including the school and community setting, state and national educational policies, and the issues of professional concern to teachers. The findings of Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) emphasized the need for further inquiry into teachers' sense of efficacy relative to the context of teaching:

We learned that current conditions in the schools--the isolation, the difficulty in assessing one's effectiveness as a teacher, the lack of collegial and administrative support, and the sense of powerlessness that comes from limited collegial decision-making--make it difficult for teachers to maintain a strong sense of efficacy. (Ashton, 1984, p. 28)

In addition, foreign language teachers have special concerns related to national, state, and local demands for greater effectiveness in the workplace (Brickell & Paul, 1982; T. Cooper, 1985; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, 1979; Simon, 1980). The national emphasis on the importance of increasing foreign language study by U.S. students, on developing and measuring oral proficiency skills of each child, and on offering foreign language training for all children regardless of first language ability and literacy has placed increased demands on foreign language teachers. Lack of time, limited resources, and little classroom space to encourage awareness of target cultures and to provide the learning environments with cultural artifacts, realia, and the feeling of cultural immersion have also been of concern. Government policy concerning bilingual-multicultural education, teaching English as a second language, and second language learning versus second language acquisition is not yet definitive (Fradd, 1985), and confusion over definitions and requirements regarding

second language teaching has added to the concerns of foreign language teachers. Foreign language teachers have increasingly felt the pressure for reform under difficult teaching conditions in a rapidly changing society.

Galloway's conclusion summarizes this section:

If a single message has pervaded the last three decades, it is that significant and lasting change in the [foreign language] secondary classroom cannot be accomplished without the desire, commitment, and investment of the teacher. Yet, the desire for change cannot be nourished in an atmosphere of isolation and faltering support. (1983, p. 353)

The problem, then, was that teachers' sense of efficacy was influenced by factors in the context of the workplace and by current sociocultural issues in the teaching profession. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe those contextual factors and to detect cultural patterns and themes that explained and characterized foreign language teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness.

#### Subject Area, Setting, and Participants

The 20 public high school Spanish teachers employed in one southeastern school district during the 1984-85 school year participated in the present study. For the purposes of this study, high school is defined as that level of public secondary school education that is comprised of grades 9 through 12. Foreign language education is defined

as "teaching a language that is not native to the students and providing the instruction within a social and geographical environment where the target language is not the predominant language" (Jaeger, 1985, p. 2).

The study was conducted as the school district was responding to the national call for reform in public schools. Efforts to implement reform resulted in controversy and concern in the local community over such issues as teacher qualifications and evaluation, merit pay, rezoning, busing, class size, stricter academic requirements for graduation, and number of high school class periods. There was emphasis in the school district on standardizing instruction, curricula, and administrative procedures in the six area high schools, three of which are rural, three of which are urban.

In local print and television media, the district superintendent of schools noted teacher salaries and teacher work environment as the two most important areas for improvement in the district school system. Weakness in the system was attributed to a lack of resources, while the district's cadre of teachers was characterized as solid, stable, competent, and dedicated. In sum, constraints of time, space, and money had negatively affected the district during the 1984-85 school year, according to the superintendent.

The district high school foreign language program in the 1984-85 school year was affected by changes that resulted from the national reform movement in education. Recent mandates in the southeastern state where the present study was conducted increased foreign language requirements for high school graduation. Enrollment in foreign languages in turn increased, particularly in the five levels of high school Spanish. More than 4,500 secondary, middle, and elementary school students were enrolled in the district foreign language program during the 1984-85 school year. Foreign language class sizes also increased. State mandates also changed the student population that participated in foreign language classes. These classes, Spanish classes in particular, were opened to students of all ability levels. Proficiency in English was no longer a primary consideration for placement of students in high school Spanish classes. In addition to the five levels of traditional Spanish, the curriculum included an introductory Spanish course with less emphasis on grammar, reading, and writing skills and more emphasis on conversational skills. The persistent problem of combined classes continued. Spanish teachers were not only assigned to larger classes, with students of all ability levels, but also were often required to teach more than one level of the target language in one classroom. The addition of a

seventh period to the school day increased the number of classes each teacher taught.

This setting was selected because high school Spanish teachers in particular in this school district had special concerns about their effectiveness in the workplace based on these changes in the national, state, and local climate of teaching. As a former high school Spanish teacher in the school district and as a resident of the community, the researcher understood the setting and the need to identify the factors in the context of teaching that influenced teachers' sense of efficacy.

Other factors contributed to the selection of high school Spanish teachers in this school district. First, the Spanish language was more heavily represented in the community than the other foreign languages taught in the district schools; hence, contextual factors that affected teachers' sense of efficacy arose out of community concerns as well as professional concerns. Second, teachers of high school Spanish were the most numerous group in the school district among teachers of foreign languages; hence, a larger population could be studied. Third, several teachers were native Spanish-speakers and the researcher hypothesized that they may have experienced contextual factors differently than Anglo or other non-native teachers. Fourth, through personal communication with the researcher, the district supervisor of the foreign language



education program confirmed that many of the high school Spanish teachers in particular were concerned about the changes in the foreign language program and about their role and status as teachers based on the national, state, and local climate in which they were teaching. Last, examples in the target language and cultural vignettes that teachers give to illustrate specific teaching problems are not always comparable across languages. Selection of one language, Spanish, guaranteed that teachers' examples would be comparable.

In addition to the factors discussed above, the high school level was selected because the foreign language program was standardized and foreign language was a subject that could satisfy graduation requirements. Hence, teaching requirements were more systematic and consistent than those for middle and elementary school students. In the high school curriculum, foreign language was primarily considered an academic rather than an enrichment experience. In addition, focusing on the high school level placed the inquiry among teachers of students in a narrowed developmental category. The teachers who participated in this study taught Spanish to students in grades 9 through 12. All of these considerations involved wide-ranging contextual factors, many of which were not applicable to the other foreign language teachers in the district.

### Research Design

The goal of this study was to identify, describe, and analyze contextual factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy. A method of inquiry was needed that would enable the researcher to investigate the 20 teachers' perceptions, interpretations, and understandings of the circumstances of their teaching. Hence qualitative, naturalistic inquiry grounded in the theory of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1959) was the research perspective. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation were guided by the Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) described by Spradley (1979). The primary method of data collection was ethnographic interviewing. The Project Outline (Appendix A) structured the course of the inquiry.

A pilot study of basic skills teachers' sense of efficacy conducted by the researcher (McNeely, 1984) provided valuable experience and organization as well as familiarity with investigating the research topic and using ethnographic tools in a real life setting. The pilot study enabled the researcher to develop a model for conducting the present study including forms, checklists, and techniques (Appendices B and C). The application for human subjects research for the pilot study was extended to include this study.

The researcher prepared interview questions (see Interview Questions in Appendix B) also guided by Spradley's (1979) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) and the pilot study (McNeely, 1984). Initial questions were general in nature and were posed to elicit descriptive information about the climate of teaching as the teacher perceived it. Teachers were also asked to identify and discuss the factors in their teaching situation that they believed were important to their effective teaching. Questions also called for teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in teaching high school Spanish in the specific situations they identified as problematic. All 20 teachers participated in at least one in-depth interview, the majority of which lasted two hours. In order to clarify teachers' remarks, corroborate hunches, and include additional information--characteristic needs of the ethnographic interviewing process--several teachers were briefly questioned again as the researcher developed other questions during the process of data collection and analysis. Interviewing began in May, 1985, and continued through the summer months.

Data analysis began with the transcription of the first interview aided by formats, cross-referencing techniques, and checklists developed by the researcher in the pilot study (Appendix B). The cyclical nature of the ethnographic interview methodology established a research

routine whereby data collection, analysis, synthesis, and interpretation were a multi-stage, integrated, ongoing process. Refinement of techniques and consideration of methodological issues took place along with further delineation of questions that arose out of data analysis as it was juxtaposed with the interview process. Drafting the ethnographic account began as the researcher discovered the patterns and cultural themes that emerged as a result of data analysis.

### Scope of the Study

This study was conducted during the 1984-85 school year in one southeastern school district. All 20 public high school Spanish teachers participated in the study. The researcher personally interviewed each teacher.

Three guiding questions served to focus the study:

(a) How do high school Spanish teachers describe their teaching situation and workplace? (b) What are the contextual factors that high school Spanish teachers believe help and hinder their success in teaching in their teaching situation and current workplace? and (c) How do high school Spanish teachers judge their capability to perform in their current position? Consideration of the recurrent phenomena that emerged from the interview and field data provided refinement of the construct of teachers' sense of efficacy and its theoretical and practical implications.

### Significance of the Study

The qualitative study of contextual factors influencing high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy provided a more complete understanding of the complexities of foreign language teachers' concerns in their place of work. Because the inquiry grew out of actual, real life conditions in an existing high school foreign language program, insight derived using qualitative research methodology provided a better understanding of the dynamics of teaching in a particular sociocultural climate. It was thought that the research results would contribute to the body of knowledge about teachers' sense of efficacy by (a) identifying, describing, and analyzing the contextual factors that influence high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy and (b) providing implications and recommendations based on the results of this research.

### Overview of Chapters

The development and documentation of the issues related to the stated problem, the details of the research design, and further description of the context of teaching and the participants are presented in chapters II through V. Chapter II is a review of the literature on sense of efficacy, teachers' sense of efficacy, the context of teaching, and the special concerns of foreign language teachers. Chapter III is a discussion of the qualitative

research perspective for this study, grounded in the theory of symbolic interactionism using the method of ethnographic interviewing. Discussion of the research method by which the researcher conducted the inquiry includes presentation of the data collection and analysis model (McNeely, 1984) and the methodological issues of researcher qualifications, interests, and biases, and validity. Chapter IV is a discussion of the findings, the contextual factors that were found to influence high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy. The final chapter, chapter V, is a discussion of the conclusions drawn as a result of this research and of the implications of these findings for the research community and practitioners.

## CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

The purpose of this review of the literature is to provide background for the problem investigated in this study. The review includes the literature on sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1977a; Beck & Lund, 1981; Collins, 1982; Schunk, 1981) with particular emphasis on teachers' sense of efficacy (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Denham & Michael, 1981; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The literature documenting teacher concerns and stress as related to the context of teaching is also reviewed. The last part of the review focuses on concerns of high school foreign language teachers.

It is important to note that the construct, teachers' sense of efficacy, is a relatively recent topic in educational research, and while the review included all of the pertinent studies, there is currently a dearth of information on the subject. The term, teachers' sense of efficacy, is, however, finding its way into the language of the practitioner (Berliner & Piñero, 1984; George, 1983; Good & Brophy, 1984) and the literature on teacher education (Ashton, 1984). It was one of the aims of this

study to add to the body of descriptive, naturalistic information about teachers' sense of efficacy and to aid in defining future research directions.

This chapter includes areas reviewed before data collection was begun. It is important to note that as often happens in qualitative studies, data analysis revealed additional areas that warranted review. Review of these topics is located in the discussion of the findings in chapter IV.

### Sense of Efficacy

The concept, sense of efficacy, derived from Bandura's (1977a) construct of self-efficacy, refers to individuals' judgment of their capability to perform a given task. This judgment may be influenced by many factors, one of which is the context of the workplace. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the contextual factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy, their ability to perform in the workplace.

Efficacy has also been defined as "the individual's perceived expectancy of obtaining valued outcomes through personal effort" (Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch, 1982, p. 7). Bandura (1984) maintains that through cognitive processing, information is evaluated by the individual and integrated into self-appraisal and estimates of effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Individuals' estimates of their performance behavior based on past



experiences, interactions, successes, failures, and other conditions in turn influence their motivation to continue that behavior. According to Bandura (1984), self-efficacy is not equated with self-concept, self-esteem, or self-worth, which are mediated by consequences; rather it involves a cognitive process of balancing expectations with knowledge of past experience.

"People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious" (Bandura, 1984, p. 231). The terms, high efficacy and low efficacy, describe the construct as applied to levels of an individual's capability or adeptness at managing. Sense of efficacy is also expressed in three dimensions (Bandura, 1977b). The range of task difficulty is described in terms of magnitude. The scope of efficacy expectations, that is, applicability to specific situations only, or extension beyond specific situations, is described in terms of generality. In addition, extinguishing expectancy or persevering in coping efforts is described in terms of strength. According to Kazdin (1978), sense of efficacy is not a general disposition but is related to individuals' judgment of their ability to perform specific tasks under specific conditions. A person's self-perceived ability, then, influences the cognitive selection of coping strategies, skills to exercise control, courses of action

to take, and factors affecting perseverance. In sum, perceived self-efficacy affects motivation.

Because sense of efficacy is important in understanding human motivation, it is necessary to describe studies that document the validity of the construct. Several studies describe the effect of perceived self-efficacy on human performance and motivation. Research on sense of efficacy has been conducted in the area of psychotherapy and recently in education.

Collins (1982) reported, in a study of children's mathematical ability based on standardized arithmetic tests, that children who judged themselves to be efficacious were more successful than children who judged themselves to be inefficacious. In addition, perceived self-efficacy predicted positive attitudes toward mathematics, but ability did not. Moreover, children who perceived themselves to be efficacious attributed their failures to insufficient effort, whereas those who regarded themselves as inefficacious ascribed their failures to deficient ability. Research in sense of efficacy in educational research was applied to the study of children's mathematical ability because mathematics is a subject that calls for immediate task evaluation and performance prediction (A. Schulte, personal communication, June 15, 1985). Bandura discussed the importance of this dimension of self-efficacy as "generative capability" (1984, p. 232),

that is, high efficacy is not merely an ability to master isolated component skills but is an adeptness at managing an entire act. Self-perceptions of capability are not defined in terms of the components of an act but in terms of the execution of an act. For example, linguistic self-efficacy is not construed as a collection of words or fixed sentences but in using them effectively under diverse circumstances (Bandura, 1984). Generative capability refers to the capacity to use skills effectively, not merely to possess them.

According to Rappoport and Williams (1982), self-efficacy is important relative to phobic disorders. They conducted a study of agoraphobics who attempted to drive in natural settings. Self-appraisals of driving capabilities influenced decisions made during the experience. In other words, individuals' judgment of their ability to perform the skills required to drive an automobile in a natural driving situation influenced their ability to execute the task.

Beck and Lund (1981) studied dental patients' perceived self-efficacy relative to their ability to carry out a prescribed health regimen. Subjects were exposed to persuasive advice designed to influence their beliefs about the seriousness of disease and patients' susceptibility to it. It was found that patients' sense of efficacy was the most important predictor of behavior to carry out the

prescribed regimen. Efficacious patients adopted specific recommendations, while inefficacious, fearful patients did not.

In a study of 209 undergraduates, Locke, Frederick, Lee, and Bobko (1984) examined students' task strategies and self-efficacy in relation to goal setting using an object identification strategy. They found that self-efficacy affects goal level, task performance, goal commitment, and even choice to set a specific rather than a nonspecific goal. They concluded that self-efficacy and performance are reciprocally related, supporting Bandura's (1982a) claim that self-efficacy is a key, causal variable in performance and that past performance is a key determinant of self-efficacy. It can be seen, then, that people's beliefs about their capabilities influence how they behave, how they think, and how they react emotionally in taxing situations (Bandura, 1984).

Characteristic of highly efficacious people is the desire to set challenges (Bandura, 1977a), to intensify efforts at critical performance points (Bandura & Cervone, 1983), to persevere despite repeated failures (Schunk, 1981), to attribute failure to insufficient effort rather than deficient ability (Collins, 1982), and to cope with potentially difficult tasks self-assuredly (Bandura, 1982b). A person's sense of efficacy is an important determiner of interest, perseverance, and feelings of

accomplishment based on performance. It is also believed that personal cognitions exert important effects on motivation and achievement behavior (Ashton & Webb, in press; Schunk, 1984) and that cognitive interventions for strengthening sense of efficacy may be provided by specific task-related strategies (Schunk & Rice, 1984).

In summary, Bandura (1977a, 1982a, 1984) proposed that a person's behavior is influenced by two factors, one a belief that certain behavior yields certain outcomes and, two, a belief that the person has the required skills to bring about the outcomes. Bandura also proposed four sources of information that influence personal efficacy: performance accomplishment, vicarious (observational) experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (e.g., heart rate) (Bandura, 1977a). Bandura's (1977b) social learning theory also posits a multivariate and dynamic relationship between behavior, person, and environment. Psychological appraisal of capability is influenced by the interaction of the person in the environment.

While the literature continues to define the construct, sense of efficacy, and documents the importance of sense of efficacy in psychotherapy techniques and in children's sense of efficacy, there are few studies of teachers' sense of efficacy. The following section reviews

the literature in this area as it has recently evolved and as it relates to the present study.

### Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

Effective teachers see themselves as efficacious, or possessing the characteristics of highly successful teachers (Good & Brophy, 1984). Teachers' sense of efficacy refers to the extent to which teachers believe they have the capacity to affect student learning (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983). Bolster notes that teachers' actual efficacy, that is, their teaching effectiveness, depends upon "the ability to make accurate predictions about the relationships between classroom variables and students' task and social behavior" (1983, p. 306). Teachers' own sense of their efficacy, therefore, serves as an indicator of their actual efficacy or ability to make accurate predictions. Research suggests that teachers' beliefs in their ability to teach may influence their effectiveness (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Barfield & Burlingame, 1974; Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977; Brookover et al., 1978; Denham & Michael, 1981; Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

The construct, sense of efficacy, was applied to teacher performance and student achievement in two Rand Corporation evaluation studies (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977) and a significant relationship was reported. In a study of 100 Title III ESEA projects,

Berman et al. (1977) concluded that teachers' beliefs in their ability to instruct students influenced project effectiveness. Armor et al. (1976) reached a similar conclusion in a study of inner-city schools that were successful in increasing reading scores. Teachers' sense of efficacy was reported to be positively related to student achievement. In both studies two Likert scale items were used to measure teachers' sense of efficacy:

1. When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.
 

1) Strongly agree	2) Agree	3) Neither agree nor disagree	4) Disagree	5) Strongly disagree
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2. If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.
 

1) Strongly agree	2) Agree	3) Neither agree nor disagree	4) Disagree	5) Strongly disagree
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(Berman et al., 1977, pp. 159-160)

Item interpretation was based on Rotter's (1966) theory of internal and external locus of control. The two studies (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977) demonstrated that teachers' sense of efficacy was related to student achievement. In a process-product approach to teachers' sense of efficacy, Soar and Soar (1982) confirmed this finding but reported that the meaning of the relationship was not clear. They argued that teachers' sense of

efficacy and student achievement might have a circular relationship.

Denham and Michael (1981) further defined the construct, teachers' sense of efficacy, and proposed a model for further research. The construct consists of two parts, a cognitive component and an affective component. The cognitive component is teachers' assessment of two separate phenomena: (a) the extent to which teachers believe students can be taught, and (b) the extent to which given teachers believe they personally can teach given students under given circumstances. The affective component is the feeling and degree of success or failure experienced by the teacher.

In addition, Denham and Michael (1981) categorized components for investigating teachers' sense of efficacy--teacher training (inservice and preservice), teaching experiences, systems variables, and personal variables. They suggested that teachers' sense of efficacy can be influenced by preservice and inservice training programs, by interaction with students and colleagues, by degree of support from the school administration, community, and society, and by teachers' personal needs and characteristics.

In 1982, Ashton and Webb provided support for two different dimensions of teachers' sense of efficacy and outlined a theoretical framework for future study



incorporating Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological approach to educational research. To understand the dynamics affecting teachers' sense of efficacy, a perspective was required that could accommodate complex relationships among variables. In past research approaches, "antecedent and consequent conditions are couched in terms of variables that are conceived as linear, additive, and distinct from each other" (Bronfenbrenner, 1976a, p. 6). Ashton and Webb (1982) suggested that analyses permit study of the interrelationships and interdependencies among variables.

In an extensive study of teachers' sense of efficacy, Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) developed a conceptual framework for the study of teachers' sense of efficacy based on an ethnographic comparison of two middle schools, a study of 48 high school basic skills teachers, and review of the research literature on teaching. They reported significant relationships among teachers' sense of efficacy, student-teacher interaction, and student achievement. Current conditions in schools were identified as factors that influence teachers' sense of efficacy.

In their conceptual framework, Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) suggested that one dimension, personal efficacy, and another dimension, teaching efficacy, comprise teachers' sense of efficacy or personal teaching efficacy. Teaching efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs that students can be taught. Personal efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in

their own ability to teach. Personal teaching efficacy, then, is teachers' belief in their own ability to teach and affect student learning. According to Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983), it is important to separate the two dimensions in order to be able to determine the origin of sense of inefficacy.

They also identified eight considerations that distinguished high from low efficacy teachers. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy had a sense of personal accomplishment, positive expectations for student behavior and achievement, personal responsibility for student learning, strategies for achieving objectives, positive affect, sense of control, sense of common teacher-student goals and democratic decision-making regarding goals, and strategies for achieving goals (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983).

Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) also discussed areas of complexity in studying teachers' sense of efficacy: its multi-dimensional nature; its relevance to student type, subject area, teacher attitudes, and effectiveness; its need for teacher self-report and teacher-stated goals; and finally its relationship to other factors, factors in the conditions and circumstances of teaching, contextual factors. The present researcher's ethnographic pilot study (McNeely, 1984) of nine of the basic skills teachers interviewed in the study of Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983)

confirmed the findings that teachers' sense of efficacy is influenced by specific teaching situations. The researcher developed a research model based on Spradley's (1979) Developmental Research Sequence that also served as the model for the present study. Details of the model are discussed in chapter III.

The purpose of the pilot study was to discover beliefs that basic skills English teachers had about their ability to have a positive effect on the learning outcomes of low-achieving students. The researcher found that factors in the context of teaching played a major role in teachers' sense of efficacy, specifically poor work conditions, lack of materials and resources, little cooperation from colleagues who were not teachers of basic skills students, and lack of support from school administration. It was concluded that further investigation was needed to identify, describe, and analyze factors in the context of teaching that influenced teachers' sense of efficacy.

Several studies have contributed to other dimensions of the evolving construct of teachers' sense of efficacy. Barfield and Burlingame (1974) discussed teachers' sense of efficacy in terms of pupil control ideology. In their study, teachers' sense of efficacy was measured by an instrument described by Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) which was originally devised to measure individuals' attitudes toward political action. This

5-item instrument, renamed by Barfield and Burlingame the Teacher Efficacy Scale, measured individuals' sense of powerlessness to change their situation using Milbrath's (1965) definition of efficacy as a positive attitude toward accomplishing goals through politics. They concluded that teachers with a low sense of efficacy may see control of students as more important than teachers with a high sense of efficacy and will spend more energy coping with the environment than teachers with a high sense of efficacy. Maintaining order in the classroom, organizing books and materials, and paying strict attention to record keeping were identified as coping with the environment.

Ashton, Olejnik, Crocker, and McAuliffe (1982) developed a 50-item questionnaire designed to overcome the limitations of the 2-item Rand efficacy measure. This instrument, the Personal Teaching Efficacy Vignette Scale, was constructed based on teachers' descriptions of their most and least effective teaching experience.

Ashton, Buhr, and Crocker (1984) investigated approaches to determine whether the construct of teachers' sense of efficacy was a self-referenced or norm-referenced construct. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether teachers evaluated their sense of teaching effectiveness by asking themselves, "How effective am I?" or "Am I more or less effective than other teachers?" (Ashton, Buhr, & Crocker, 1984, p. 31). They found that

teachers appear to perceive their effectiveness in terms of a norm-referenced construct; that is, teachers evaluate their effectiveness by comparing their performance to the performance of other teachers.

Identifying the need to continue research in measuring teachers' sense of efficacy, Gibson and Dembo (1984) investigated teachers' sense of efficacy, provided validation for the construct, and examined the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and observable teacher behaviors. Factor analysis of responses from elementary school teachers to a 30-item Likert Teacher Efficacy Scale yielded two factors that corresponded to Bandura's theoretical model.

The first factor appeared to represent a teacher's sense of personal teaching efficacy, or belief that the teacher has the skills and abilities to bring about student learning. This dimension corresponded to the Rand Item, "If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students" (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977). This factor conformed to Bandura's (1977a) conceptualization that behavior is influenced by a sense of self-efficacy.

The second factor represented a teacher's sense of teaching efficacy, or belief that ability to bring about student learning may be limited by external influences such as home environment, parental influence, and school

conditions. This dimension corresponded to the Rand Item, "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment" (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977). This factor conformed to Bandura's (1977a) conceptualization that behavior is also influenced by a general outcome expectancy.

Because teachers' sense of efficacy has been identified as a variable that may account for individual differences in teaching effectiveness, it is important to describe factors in teaching contexts. Teachers' sense of efficacy is dependent upon the specific teaching situation, is negotiated daily (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983), and is affected by school-level factors (Ashton, Doda, Webb, Olejnik, & McAuliffe, 1981). Teachers' estimates that their behavior will lead to particular teaching outcomes influence the degree to which teachers believe the environment can be controlled, that is, the extent to which students can be taught given such factors as family background, IQ, and school conditions (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). As a result of their research, Gibson and Dembo (1984) called for further investigation of the relationships between situational and organizational variables and teachers' sense of efficacy since teacher efficacy is likely to be situation specific. Denham and Michael (1981) also called for further research on

teachers' sense of efficacy in the context of the workplace. In addition, Sadowski and Woodward (1983) reported that teachers' beliefs are related to their attitudes about teaching and to external factors. They also called for further research to delineate factors that influence teachers' attitudes orientations. Research supports the notion that successful instruction is related to teachers' belief that success is possible for themselves as teachers and for their students (Cohen, 1981).

Based on the need for further research, the present study sought to identify and describe the contextual factors that high school Spanish teachers believed influenced their effectiveness as teachers. Teachers provided details about their own circumstances of teaching, the manner in which they appraised specific situations, and the coping strategies they employed as they taught. These combined details provided qualitative, naturalistic, real-life vignettes through which teachers' sense of efficacy could be discussed. Kazdin (1978) emphasized that the recency of efficacy theory makes it an area for needed research.

### The Context of Teaching

The purpose of this section is to review the literature documenting that the national, state, and local sociocultural milieu in this country has created a climate in teaching that has had profound effects on teachers and

their feelings of effectiveness. Context is discussed in terms of the overall atmosphere surrounding the profession today and in terms of particular circumstances, issues, and conditions in which events have occurred relative to this study. The importance of the consideration of context as a vital element in qualitative, naturalistic inquiry is discussed in chapter III.

Several studies attest to the fact that a new "zeitgeist" has emerged in public education as Lortie predicted (1973, p. 474). His observations on teaching as work predicted that the institutional features of schooling would create changes in the ways public education would be studied. According to Lortie, "to think differently about schools is to think differently about teachers" (1973, p. 474). The teaching profession is deeply implicated in the structure of schools and sociocultural changes have caused changes in schools.

Research has shown that the context in which teaching occurs influences effective teaching and learning (Anderson, 1982; Boyer, 1983; Brookover et al., 1978; Duke, 1984; Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1971;Sizer, 1984; Webb, 1981). Indeed, many of these authors maintain that teaching is a profession in trouble and that problems exist that are directly related to factors in the context in which teachers teach.



Opening statements in several studies recently conducted are indicative of the results of research on schools in the current climate in this country: "Education is in the headlines once again" (Boyer, 1983, p. 1); "American schools are in trouble" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 1); the portentous introduction, "Here is an English teacher, Horace Smith" (Sizer, 1984, p. 9); and "Would you teach in a public school today?" (Duke, 1984, p. 3). Each author drew conclusions based on research studies emphasizing the importance of understanding teaching in the context in which it occurs.

Boyer (1983) evaluated American high schools in terms of curricula, conditions, and participants, and concluded that whatever is wrong with public schools cannot be improved without the help of teachers currently teaching. He insisted that improving the conditions that discourage teachers be the center of any effort to improve teaching. Teachers are deeply troubled, according to Boyer, not only about salaries, but also about their professional status, public image, and general lack of support and recognition. Too many classes, too many menial tasks not related to teaching, and few rewards have had negative effects on teachers. Not having their own classroom, teaching in overcrowded classes, and being assigned to teach courses for which they were not trained, often erode teachers' professional integrity. Isolation and alienation

brought on by the absence of sharing ideas and teaching experiences with colleagues have also contributed to questions of effectiveness. Lack of administrative support and inadequate resources were also cited by teachers as negative factors.

Goodlad (1984) also examined American public schools and provided a holistic understanding of the descriptive data obtained in his study. "It is accurate, I think to characterize the economic, social and political context of schooling as having been more negative than positive during the 1970s. School personnel perceived themselves to be working in an atmosphere of criticism, declining confidence and support, and little appreciation" (p. 167). Teachers, in particular, suffer from low professional self-esteem, yet as Goodlad pointed out, research shows that able teachers under favorable circumstances make an important difference in student learning. Teachers, however, have been restrained and inhibited by the circumstances under which they teach. These circumstances have included too many students, too many classes, administrative controls, and too many interruptions. If the circumstances of teaching inhibit teachers' effectiveness, efforts toward school improvement must take those factors into account in order to ameliorate the situation and maximize teachers' potential.

According to Goodlad (1984), the activity of teaching constitutes the largest portion of the teacher's day. Planning lessons, correcting papers and examinations, paperwork, meetings, conferring with parents, and extracurricular responsibilities also comprise teachers' work. Conscientious teachers cannot do what they expect of themselves in a normal work week. Neither are they satisfied with the remuneration they receive in light of the number of hours they work. Although he is optimistic about eventual solution of these problems, Goodlad noted that more teachers than ever before are considering leaving the profession. Research into the conditions of the workplace and the frustrations of workers and ways to improve holds promise for the teaching profession. It is necessary, however, first to describe the factors in specific contexts of teaching that influence teachers' beliefs about their own effectiveness.

In Goodlad's study, teachers indicated that problems beyond their control were most important to their feelings of effectiveness. These problems frustrate teachers' efforts to perform. Goodlad maintained that it should not be necessary to establish scientifically the relationships to effective teaching in order to accept the proposition that teachers are entitled to a satisfying workplace. By ferreting out the elements of what makes the workplace satisfying, specific entry points for improvement could be

identified. In current conditions the practicing teacher often "functions in a context where the beliefs and expectations are those of a profession but where the realities tend to constrain, likening actual practice more to a trade" (p. 193). Teachers enter the profession expecting considerable autonomy in decision making and find an atmosphere that is not conducive to professional growth. The values that encouraged teachers to enter teaching are the same values that are having a negative influence on their sense of effectiveness.

Sizer (1984), also in a study of American high schools, presented a troubling picture of current school environments. He concluded that both teachers and teaching are underrated. "Managing a high school classroom is a complex business, requiring judgment about adolescents as well as a sense of order, a firm grasp of the subject under study, and a thorough understanding about the accepted folkways of the craft" (p. 3). Teachers are not given enough credit for managing this task. Sizer contended that only the people at the level of the teaching/learning activity know what is effective and ineffective at particular stages, yet teachers have little autonomy in carrying out what they know to be effective. Teachers have little room to work in their own appropriate ways and they must work within a bureaucracy that does not lend itself to flexibility and innovation.

Drawing extensively on recent educational research, Duke (1984) examined factors that contributed to the troubled state of the teaching profession today. He identified current trends and issues in the teaching profession that point to a "profession locked in a downward spiral" (p. 22). Factors such as lay-offs and reassignments undermine job security. Issues such as salaries, desegregation, mainstreaming, busing, zoning, teacher testing and competency, and merit pay figure prominently among concerns of teachers. Duke described "an ethos hostile to professionalism" (p. 71) when he noted that public criticism and complaints have led to decreased resources for education at a time when expectations and bureaucratic regulations have increased for practitioners. He stated, "teachers no longer can be reasonably sure they will have the opportunity to teach what they were trained to teach or where they feel they can be most effective" (p. 71).

Lortie (1975), in his account of the teaching profession, wrote that teachers have become physically and emotionally drained working in isolation from other teachers and with students who are continually demanding. Teachers have limited extrinsic rewards, and improvement of their teaching situations is difficult because educational goals are often intangible and unclear,

assessment is difficult, and the student population is diverse.

In addition, sociocultural trends involving changing family and life styles, the influence of television and other media, and substance abuse among adolescents have become major influences on teachers and their effectiveness in today's high schools. Included among the significant social trends affecting schooling are changes in family patterns, increases in minority students, increases in overall numbers of students and elderly, sexism in society, cultural and religious pluralism, and evolving social norms and value structures ("Likely future trends," 1985).

Psychologist David Elkind (1981, 1984) has written extensively on the effects of a changing society on adolescents. A significant portion of Elkind's (1984) writing was devoted to schooling in America today and its effects not only on adolescents but also on teachers. Societal changes have made teaching more stressful and less rewarding for teachers. He defined stress as "an excessive demand for adjustment that can arise from within or from outside of ourselves" (p. 160). Emphasizing that problems for schools and teachers are merely reflections of the tensions of the larger society, Elkind also stated that "the climate necessary to foster good teaching in the modern high school has virtually disappeared" (p. 153). Teaching, he said, has become a chore for teachers.

These studies pointed out general concerns of teachers and called for comprehensive reform not only for schools themselves but also for the teaching profession. Without such reform the authors believe that the teaching profession will be a victim of an "ethos of despair" (Duke, 1984, p. 16). Problems have arisen when teachers' expectations for a challenging career in a facilitative work environment were dowsed by realities of routine tasks unrelated to teaching, ambiguous and often contradictory administrative policies, and practices that interferred with and inhibited their effectiveness.

Concerns of teachers relative to the work environment are substantially documented (Andrews, Sherman, & Webb, 1983; Ashton et al., 1981; Chapman, 1983; Farber & Miller, 1981; A. Gallup, 1985a; Lampert, 1985; Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Lortie, 1973; MacPhail-Wilcox & Hyler, 1985; Parkay, 1976; Tye & Tye, 1984; Webb, 1983). It is common to find such descriptors as frustration, burnout (Maslach, 1982), powerlessness, status panic (Webb, 1983), alienation, isolation (Andrews, Sherman & Webb, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Little, 1982), uncertainty (Jackson, 1968), career dissatisfaction (Chapman, 1983), and low morale (Brodinsky, 1984). Although the purview of this study was not to examine these variables individually, their prsence in the overall context in which high school Spanish teachers worked must be acknowledged. As discovered in the pilot

study (McNeely, 1984), many of these descriptors characterized teachers' perceptions of their professional lives.

Other teacher concerns have been noted in the professional literature. Teachers are isolated but do not work in a vacuum; they work within a classroom and school ecology (Tikunoff & Ward, 1978). They are expected to meld with the ongoing social system of the school in which they work, yet few opportunities exist to encourage professional growth (Fuchs, 1969; Maslach, 1982). Discipline in schools continues to be a problem (Apple, 1984). Teachers have little voice in curriculum matters (Apple, 1984; Bloom, 1978; Parkay, 1976). Questions of teacher competency and qualifications and problems in teacher evaluation (Millman, 1981; Stodolsky, 1984) have evoked concern about professional status and job security. Adding to what some perceive as professional malaise are the differences between teachers' attitudes about their work and the public's attitudes.

Recent polls (A. Gallup, 1985a, 1985b; G. Gallup, 1984) have indicated that teachers' attitudes are uniform and are frequently different from attitudes of the public. Teachers are somewhat negative about the desirability and status of teaching as a profession. They favor higher salaries for teachers and more control of instruction and textbook selection, while the public feels



parents and school boards should have more control. In contrast to teachers' attitudes, the public favors merit pay as a means of rewarding outstanding teachers. While the public is more favorably disposed toward public schools and teachers than in times past, these differences in attitudes have contributed to professional malaise. Teachers, especially female teachers, are leaving the profession to take advantage of increasing job opportunities in other areas that have more prestige and higher salary (Wangberg, Metzger, & Levitov, 1982).

Successful teaching experiences strengthen teachers' sense of effectiveness, yet work conditions and the sociocultural milieu are often not conducive to successful teaching. Researchers have called for assessing the effects of organizational structure on teachers' attitudes and improving conditions in schools whereby teachers may exercise their expertise (Ashton et al., 1981; Carbone, 1984; MacPhail-Wilcox & Hyler, 1985). A sense of accomplishment is important to workers in education "where the product--student achievement--is intangible, and monetary rewards are not associated with the product" (Denham & Michael, 1981, p. 54).

When teachers are not able to feel a sense of accomplishment and when they feel their efforts are thwarted, stress has been seen as one of the resultant conditions. Teacher stress, anxiety, and coping have

become significant areas of research (Aptekar, 1984; Friesen & Williams, 1985; Halpin, Harris, & Halpin, 1985; Keavney & Sinclair, 1978; Kranz, 1983; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Litt & Turk, 1985; Pollard, 1982; Smilansky, 1984; Sutton & Huberty, 1984; Wangberg, 1984).

An excessive demand for adjustment (Elkind, 1984) leads to emotional exhaustion or burnout (Maslach, 1982). Christensen (1981) noted that now teachers not only seek innovations and techniques for teaching their subject area but also seek coping strategies for managing the condition of being "under fire," the condition of burnout (p. 13). Among the indicators of teacher stress are loss of concern for and detachment from people and events in the workplace, feelings of cynicism about students and their ability to learn, lower quality of teaching, depression, and thoughts of leaving the profession (Walsh, 1979). These factors may also contribute to low sense of efficacy (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983). Maslach (1982) concluded that an unfacilitative work context can crush the efforts of a teacher who brings high ideals and a desire to help others to the job. The importance for education is that while stress may not lead to dissatisfaction with teaching as a career, it may affect teachers' sense of efficacy or influence their remaining in their current positions (Bloland & Selby, 1980; Litt & Turk, 1985).

Several researchers on teacher stress noted that the school environment, particularly at the high school level, is often conducive to negative and strained relationships (Aptekar, 1984; Friesen & Williams, 1985; Halpin, Harris, & Halpin, 1985; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977; Litt & Turk, 1985; Sutton & Huberty, 1984). In addition, some researchers have called for qualitative interview studies to identify and describe stressors in specific teaching contexts based on teachers' perceptions and appraisals of their ability to perform in the workplace.

Pollard (1982), for instance, proposed a model of coping strategies based on grounded ethnographic research. He has called for description of factors that encapsulate structure and action, that is, factors describing teaching in the context of the workplace. The need exists to identify and describe factors in the context of teaching that appear to influence teachers' appraisal mechanisms as they balance their expectations with the reality of the environment. Researchers have called for qualitative, descriptive studies as a step in elaborating the theoretical framework of teachers' sense of efficacy.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) found that teachers report high rates of stress in four areas: poor working conditions, poor school ethos, time pressures, and student misbehavior. These categories are also reported by Coughlan (1970) and Wangberg (1984). As factors in the

environment are identified as stress-causing, appraisal and coping techniques may be employed to effect more satisfying outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In their multidisciplinary work on stress theory, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described stress as the relationship between a person and environment that is appraised by the person to be taxing or endangering well-being. A person's judgment that an environment is exceeding that person's resources hinges on beliefs, commitment, cognitive appraisal, and coping strategies based on past experience. Cognitive appraisal is an evaluative process of categorizing the meaning or significance that factors in the environment have for a person. Lazarus and Folkman maintained that factors must be specified that affect the nature of the appraisal process. If a person perceives that environmental factors exceed resources, changes in beliefs, commitments, and judgment of ability to perform effectively may occur.

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe factors in the context of teaching that high school Spanish teachers believed influenced their feelings of effectiveness. In the next section, concerns of foreign language teachers as documented in the research literature are discussed.

### Concerns of Foreign Language Teachers

Teacher concerns have paralleled the changes in the field of foreign language education in this country and presently include national, state, and local demands for greater effectiveness in the workplace (Brickell & Paul, 1982; T. Cooper, 1985; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, 1979; Simon, 1980). From solid governmental support in the 1960s through the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 to gradual lessening of support in the 1970s and from emphasis on audiolingual methods to present day eclectic methods (Inman, 1984), teachers have grappled with the stubborn, persistent problems that continued to plague the profession (Galloway, 1983). The 1980s hold promise for addressing teachers' concerns in part as a result of the national reform movement in education (Mead, 1985) and the report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (1979)(King, 1985). This report, Strength Through Wisdom, focused nationwide attention on Americans' incompetence in foreign languages, postulating that part of the problem stemmed from ineffective language instruction in schools.

Wipf (1985) noted, however, that inadequate instruction may have been attributed to problems that foreign language teachers have consistently identified for

which weak or no solutions have been offered. One of these problems is multilevel classrooms, seen as a necessary strategy to meet budgetary constraints. Teachers have been concerned that parents are deluded into thinking that those classes accomplish as much as unilevel classes (T. Cooper, 1985). As noted by Wipf (1985) another problem leading to ineffective instruction is administrative placing of teachers with students, levels, and languages for which teachers have minimal or inadequate training. In addition, teachers find that there is a disparity between university and secondary school curricula, thereby making their training and continuing education less effective (Herr, 1982). Wipf (1985) also noted the lack of opportunity for inservice training to refresh language skills of teachers who teach foreign language at an elementary pace and to update their teaching methods and cultural information. Where such opportunities exist, offerings are often too general to be of practical use or are not relevant to teachers' areas of teaching (Pontillo, 1983).

Teacher concerns, then, involve not only professional issues but also the special problems specifically characteristic of foreign language curricula in the high school and its customary methods of implementation. Responding to a national survey (T. Cooper, 1985), foreign language teachers expressed concerns about class size, testing, evaluation, managing multilevel classes, promoting

and maintaining interest in students, language learning theory, program development, incorporating cultural information, using instructional aids, teaching learning disabled students, and sharing techniques with colleagues. Although these concerns were identified, there is little information in the literature addressing teachers' individual concerns in their own teaching situations based on the specific factors that contribute to problems. Concerns are acknowledged but seldom addressed.

Emphasis on the importance of increasing foreign language study, on developing and measuring oral proficiency skills of each child (Kaplan, 1984; Omaggio, 1983), and on offering language training for all children regardless of first language ability and literacy have also placed increased demands on foreign language teachers. Governmental policy concerning bilingual-multicultural education, teaching English as a second language, and second language learning versus second language acquisition is not yet definitive (Fradd, 1985); confusion over definitions and requirements regarding second language teaching has added to the concerns of teachers of foreign language. They are concerned about the relationship and status of foreign language education with other second language learning programs.

Implementation of cultural pluralism in our society also has certain requirements for teachers (Grittner,

1971). Foreign language is often met with provincialism and prejudice (Littlewood, 1984) and treated as a dispensible frill (T. Cooper, 1985). Teaching awareness of target cultures and providing classroom atmospheres with realia and cultural immersion without stereotyping are also teacher concerns (McNeely & Parker, 1983; Stern & Cummins, 1981). It is important to create interactional, communicative foreign language classes where students speak the target language while working together (Rivers, 1985), yet teachers are concerned about the feasibility of this task in their current teaching situations.

Also among professional concerns is the emphasis on qualifications and the fragmented support of professional organizations. Great importance is placed on qualifications and requirements to be effective foreign language teachers (Brickell & Paul, 1982; Lange, 1983). Requirements are imposed by states, individual school systems, teacher education programs, college and university foreign language departments, and professional organizations. Teachers must not only be knowledgeable and skilled in the target language or languages, they must also be keen perceivers and fulfillers of student needs at all phases of learning. They must implement the mandated curriculum regardless of the conditions of the teaching situation and everchanging political and sociocultural climate (McArthur, 1983). Foreign language teacher



concerns are not centered around the importance of meeting the requirements but the ability to meet the requirements in current teaching situations.

Professional organizations seem to offer little help. McGlone (1983) lamented the chaos and fragmentation of the many foreign language teachers' professional organizations and discussed the need to unify organizations as a means of providing teachers with more professional support. Professional journals offer information on the state-of-the-art in foreign language teaching techniques, such as the Cloze Procedure, the Rassias Method, the audiolingual method, the functional-notional syllabus, and Suggestopedia. Information about the evolution of the field of foreign language education and proclamations about the future abound, but little information for teachers is offered regarding teaching and managing in specific teaching situations. Pleas to resolve serious ills are ignored (Galloway, 1984).

Qualitative, descriptive studies based on interview data are needed to elucidate information for and about practitioners in individual contexts of teaching (Stern & Cummins, 1981). Foreign language teachers' concerns must not only be acknowledged, they must also be addressed.

### Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter has provided the background for investigating high school foreign

language teachers' sense of efficacy in the context of teaching. Several studies have provided information about the construct of sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1977a; Beck & Lund, 1981; Collins, 1982; Schunk, 1981; Schunk & Rice, 1984). Studies have applied the construct to teachers (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Denham & Michael, 1981; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In addition, studies of the conditions of the workplace and the status of the teaching profession have described the context in which teachers' sense of efficacy may be studied (Boyer, 1983; Duke, 1984; Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Sizer, 1984). Research on teacher stress identified the teaching environment as an important influence on teacher effectiveness (Friesen & Williams, 1985; Halpin, Harris, & Halpin, 1985; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1977; Litt & Turk, 1985; Sutton & Huberty, 1984). Finally, concerns of foreign language teachers were discussed (Brickell & Paul, 1982; T. Cooper, 1985; Galloway, 1983; McGlone, 1983; Stern & Cummins, 1981; Wipf, 1985).

This review has served as the framework for further inquiry. Consideration of organizational features of schooling aids in understanding how sense of efficacy operates toward reaching goals within a specific setting (Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch, 1982). Teachers' sense of efficacy is an important intervening variable influencing teacher effectiveness and student achievement, but how teachers account for that relative to their own

teaching circumstances is not known. It has also been noted that in the recent reform efforts, teachers themselves have seldom been heard ("Changing," 1984; Rodman, 1985a). The present study provided a forum whereby teachers' concerns as they described them in the context of their teaching could be heard. The purpose of this study was to discover the contextual factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy through the real life vignettes teachers provided as they described problematic situations that arose in the context of teaching.

In the following chapters, methodology, findings, conclusions, and implications are discussed. Chapter III discusses the research perspective, research method, procedures, and methodological issues relevant to the present study. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study, and chapter V discusses conclusions and implications.

## CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The first section of this chapter discusses the qualitative research perspective that powered the investigation of the contextual factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy. The research perspective was based on a qualitative view of educational research (Dewey, 1922, 1938; Eisner, 1979, 1984; Sherman, Webb, & Andrews, 1984) and on the theory of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969). The second section of this chapter discusses the research method used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data--the ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979)--and the research model developed by the researcher in a pilot study (McNeely, 1984). Reasons and considerations that justified the use of a qualitative research perspective, symbolic interactionism, and the ethnographic interview method in this study are presented. A final section discusses the methodological issues involving researcher qualifications and biases, interviewing, and validity in qualitative research.

### Research Perspective

In an effort to broaden the base of educational research toward solving old and persistent problems in education, educational researchers have called for qualitative or naturalistic approaches as well as quantitative approaches (Eisner, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Rist, 1979). According to some, past research approaches have construed teaching from a theoretical perspective that was incompatible with teachers' views of their work (Bolster, 1983; Medley, 1978; Tikunoff, 1981; Wilson, 1977). Research on teaching effectiveness has indicated that traditional research methodologies (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) have not been as productive in some areas as naturalistic studies (Ward, Tikunoff, & Lash, 1978). Tikunoff and Ward (1978) also maintained that teaching cannot be investigated successfully unless context is considered. In addition, educational researchers and federal funding agencies have asked what really goes on in schools (Goodlad, 1977; Rist, 1980) in order to know more than statistical and demographic information (Louis, 1980). It was important also to integrate the considerable body of research findings (Gage, 1981).

Difficulty has persisted in defining and operationally measuring such variables as teacher success, motivation, psychological adjustment, leadership abilities, and

attitudes (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1979). L. Smith argued that statistical procedures, the conceptual structure of behavioral theory, and controlled laboratory settings could not deal adequately with the "interactional, political, contextual, and cultural problems of schools" (1982, p. 590). The purpose of this study was to determine and analyze the contextual factors that influenced teachers' sense of efficacy, an area that includes teacher success, motivation, and attitudes. The researcher concluded that a qualitative research approach offered an appropriate perspective for the investigation of teachers' sense of efficacy.

Qualitative research has as its aim the understanding of human adjustment to environmental conditions (Dewey, 1922, 1938) as nearly as possible as participants feel it or live it (Lightfoot, 1983; Sherman, Webb, & Andrews, 1984). The word, qualitative, suggests description of quality, or kind, rather than measurement of quantity, or amount. Qualitative inquiry has been described as "educational connoisseurship" (Eisner, 1979, p. x), "responsive and naturalistic" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, pp. x & xi), and "another way of knowing" (Rogers, 1984, p. 85). Connoisseurship refers to discriminating what is educationally significant (Eisner, 1979); naturalistic refers to the usual, customary, and expected way people act and interact in everyday life (Tikunoff & Ward, 1980).

A qualitative research approach allows not only a way to describe and catalogue subjects' perspectives but also a way to interpret and offer insight into the meanings those perceptions have for the individuals under study (Owens, 1982). Another characteristic of qualitative educational research that was appropriate for this study was its non-interventional and non-manipulative nature (Rogers, 1984). There were no predetermined hypotheses; rather guiding questions, ideas, and hunches determined the thrust of the research effort. In addition, a qualitative research perspective calls for collecting and analyzing vast amounts of data, a tolerance for ambiguity, and a detailed and methodic organizational framework. The task of making sense of it all is time- and labor-intensive. There were several reasons that a qualitative research approach was important for this study.

The first reason concerns the nature of the inquiry. In this study the problem centered around contextual factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy, a problem that involved the quality of the teaching experience. According to Dewey (1938), all inquiry arises out of qualitative experience; that is, the actual events in which people participate in their lives influence the quality of their lives. A research approach was needed that would allow informants' own perceptions of the quality of their work experience to be the primary

source of research data, a characteristic of qualitative research. In this way, the nature of the inquiry--the quality of teachers' work experience and their perceptions of its quality for their professional lives--could be matched with the form of inquiry, a qualitative research design.

The second reason for using a qualitative research approach for this study concerns the nature of research in educational settings. The institution of schooling is enormously complex and subtle (Hansen, 1979; Rogers, 1984), and a qualitative research approach requires intensive, inclusive, and focused study emphasizing the importance of the whole environment, the context, and the interdependence of the parts that operate therein. The importance of context has been in large part ignored by traditional research approaches (Mishler, 1979).

Definitions for context abound in anthropological literature (Agar, 1980; Dobbert, 1982; Goffman, 1964; Spindler, 1982; Spradley, 1979, 1980). Shimahara writes, "One of the insights anthropology has for education is the fact that human behavior is shaped in the context of a sociocultural milieu and that every human event is culture-bound. That context consists of value premises, a configuration that shapes individual cognitive orientation" (1984, p. 64). Context can be accommodated best by a holistic view of educational research in that the whole



environment must be considered in relation to the problem under study (L. Smith, 1982). "We live and act in connection with the existing environment, not in connection with isolated objects, even though a singular thing may be crucially significant in deciding how to respond to total environment" (Dewey, 1938, p. 68). A qualitative research perspective offered a holistic view to investigate teachers' perceptions of the external and internal workings of the institution of schooling, the context of teaching, as teachers believed it influenced their own effectiveness.

A third reason concerns the need to account for Verstehen (Weber, 1964), defined by J. Smith as "a sense of the meaning that others give to their own situations through an interpretive understanding of their language" (1983, p. 12). The research approach must be able to incorporate the "attitudes, values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions of those being studied, to understand how others view the world" (Rogers, 1984, p. 87). It must allow the researcher to analyze and unravel what the informants describe as significant for themselves as meanings are created (Parkay, 1983). "The task is always one of learning how those involved interpreted and gave meaning to the situation" (Rist, 1979, p. 20). Meaning cannot always be captured in numerical terms (Stryker, 1980), and a qualitative research approach provided a way

to discern meaning through informants' descriptions of their world.

Fourth, research in the area of teachers' sense of efficacy is in its beginning stages, and rich, thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973, 1983) are needed to add to and complement the growing body of knowledge and to define further research concerns. A qualitative research approach directed attention to the description of factors that influence teachers' sense of efficacy, in this case, contextual factors. According to Rist, a qualitative research approach "enables a comprehension of human behavior in greater depth than is possible from the study of surface behavior, from paper and pencil tests, and from standardized interviews" (1979, p. 20).

Finally, it has been substantially documented that practitioners have tended to ignore the voluminous research studies and reports in education (Bolster, 1983; Good & Brophy, 1984; Rogers, 1984; Woods, 1983). Researchers' judgments of effectiveness often have not corresponded with practitioners' subjective appraisals (Tikunoff, 1981); hence, practitioners' use of research results has been limited. Qualitative descriptions are "attractive" and a "source of well-grounded, rich description and explanation of processes occurring in local contexts" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 21), and have the advantage of being intelligible to a wide audience since they are primarily

nontechnical in nature. Hence, research results are useful to practitioners and researchers alike. A qualitative research approach, then, had the potential for reducing the considerable gap between practitioners and researchers and between teachers and administrators.

This 5-part rationale has addressed the need to consider the nature of the inquiry and the nature of research in educational settings, the need to determine how teachers attach meaning to contextual factors in their teaching environments, the need to define further the construct of teachers' sense of efficacy, and the need to offer useful information to practitioners and researchers alike. To ground the research perspective in a theory that is compatible with these needs is also important (Denzin, 1978).

Blumer's (1969) theory of symbolic interactionism provided the unifying link for this study. This theory incorporated a view of human behavior anchored in the importance of meaning and context as determiners of quality of experience. Three premises relate the theory to a qualitative research perspective:

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them;
2. The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows; and

3. These meanings are handled in, and are modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.

(Blumer, 1969, p. 2)

These premises state that individuals construct their own definitions of situations as they interact and that in doing so they shape their own behavior and influence the behavior of others (Denzin, 1978). This interaction is described as symbolic because people use words and events as symbols to represent their thoughts. Thoughts, in turn, shape meaning as individuals act and react in specific situations and meaning influences behavior. The specific situations contain the contextual factors that provide meaning for appraising actions and future actions. Symbolic interactionists focus on the perspectives by which people make sense of the world, the strategies they use to achieve their goals, the context in which they set their goals, and the culture in which they interact (Woods, 1984). In addition, the theoretical implications of symbolic interactionism are particularly applicable in educational settings where foreign language and second language education are the goals because people are interacting in specific contexts using linguistic symbols to relay meaning (Tikunoff & Vázquez-Farías, 1982; Trueba & Wright, 1980-81, 1981).

Symbolic interactionism theory calls for three considerations in inquiry. First, perspectives of the participants studied must enter decisively into explanations of their behavior (Stryker, 1980). A vehicle must be provided by which participants' perspectives are recorded as primary data. Focusing only on instruments such as attitude questionnaires fails to account for perspectives in specific situations and fails to capture the participants' views of self (Denzin, 1978). According to Stryker (1980), the world as it is experienced by those studied is of critical importance. In this study, high school Spanish teachers were the participants who were asked their perspectives on the factors in the context of their teaching that they believed positively and negatively influenced their effectiveness.

Second, the process of meaning-making must be considered. Proponents of the theory of symbolic interactionism maintain that the continuing quest for self and status propels, influences, and motivates human beings to construct meaning and order in their lives as they interact with others in specific contexts (Blumer, 1969; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Stryker, 1980; Woods, 1983). The interactionist viewpoint concentrates on how people construct meanings in the ebb and flow of everyday life, how people make sense of their world. Knowledge about the behavior of human beings in a specific context is

relatively useless without some understanding of the meanings that those being studied give to their behavior (Rogers, 1984).

The most important elements of any social situation--and the work of teachers is part of a social situation--are the shared meanings that participants create and to which they respond. Shared meanings are the tacit definitions and significances of events and objects that evolve as people act and interact in their environment. These meanings are of fundamental importance because they are used to generate behavior and interpret experience (Spradley, 1980). The interactionist view takes nothing for granted about the importance of events and their meanings because the degree of importance is decided by the people under study (Woods, 1983, p. xi). In this study, high school Spanish teachers revealed meanings as they described the contextual factors they believed positively and negatively influenced their effectiveness.

Third, the context in which meaning is made must be considered. Meanings constructed by participants through social interaction must be understood in terms of the context in which meanings develop (Eddy, 1965; Fuchs, 1969; Metz, 1978). In all activities humans act on the basis of intent, note the reaction or nonreaction of others to their behavior, and act purposefully again, all of these in specific contexts (Bolster, 1983). Teachers construct and

create meaning in the context of their teaching as they act on their professional goals, as they interact with others in their teaching situation, and as they work within the sociocultural context of the workplace. These meanings arise in the overall context of teaching and in the environment of the workplace. They in turn influence teachers' sense of efficacy.

### Research Method and Model

Ethnography is a research method suggested by many qualitative researchers and symbolic interactionists (Blumer, 1969; Bolster, 1983; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Rist, 1975; Rogers, 1984; Spradley, 1972, 1979, 1980; Trueba & Wright, 1981; Woods, 1983, 1984). The method for this study, based on a qualitative view of educational research grounded in the theory of symbolic interactionism, was the ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979).

The task of undergirding ethnography with symbolic interactionist theory involved two modes of inquiry suggested by Blumer (1969)--exploration and inspection. In this study, exploration entailed interviewing high school Spanish teachers and audiotaping their descriptions of the contextual factors that they believed influenced their effectiveness as teachers. Inspection involved the scientific analysis requiring that elements be isolated and their implicit relationships discussed. Ethnography was a research method that allowed for both exploration and

inspection. Data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted using the research model developed by the researcher in a pilot study of teachers' sense of efficacy (McNeely, 1984).

The following discussion includes definitions of ethnography, its terms and key concepts relative to this study, and presentation of the model used to conceptualize and conduct the study. The components of the research model and the cyclical nature of the process of ethnographic interviewing are discussed.

In keeping with the holistic perspective that qualitative research offers, ethnography is a method that does not take place in distinct linear stages but is instead a cyclical, ongoing process. While elements of the research process can be discussed separately, these elements overlap and interrelate. The aim of ethnographic research is to discover and analyze the parts of the whole without losing sight of the whole and to discover the relationships among parts and their relationship to the whole (Spradley, 1980).

Ethnography is the work of describing a culture (Spradley, 1979). It is "a naturalistic, observational, descriptive, contextual, open-ended, and in-depth approach to doing research" (Wilcox, 1982, p. 462). It is "a narrative study (usually more descriptive than theoretical) of a bounded system in its cultural context" (Shavelson & Stern, 1981, p. 469). For the purposes of this study, the



definition of culture is "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior" (Spradley, 1979, p. 5).

Ethnography is based on the assumption that individuals have implicit and explicit meaning structures that determine their behavior and their perceptions of the world. These meaning structures can be identified, classified, and explained through specific research techniques. The aim of ethnographic research is to penetrate beneath surface appearances and reveal the threads of commonality that characterize the group under study, and allow the reader to see the informants' world as they see it (Woods, 1984). Ethnography seeks to describe a culture in its own terms (Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). In this study, the culture investigated was high school Spanish teachers' knowledge and perceptions of the contextual factors that they believed influenced their teaching effectiveness.

Ethnography in educational settings has also provided a research vehicle whereby unexpected phenomena have been discovered (Woods, 1984). For instance, Woods discussed the discovery of teachers "survival strategies" (p. 76) unconsciously developed as a result of the stress in the workplace. He noted that teacher practices aimed at minimizing teacher-student conflict and maintaining order often mimicked teaching but did little to enhance

learning. In addition, ethnographic studies offer descriptions that subjects recognize as true to life. Ethnography is concerned with substantive issues that teachers recognize as their own. It deals with their specific problems, and it attaches importance to their views. It can provide teachers with greater control over everyday events and increase their capacity to alter their own practices (Woods, 1984). Ethnographers have become greatly interested in teachers' coping strategies as they balance their professional expectations with the realities of the workplace (Pollard, 1982; Woods, 1984). Ethnography allows for consideration of teacher biography, interests, and personal resources as teachers construct their role of teacher.

Several characteristics of ethnography determined its appropriateness for this study. It requires obtaining the perceptions and feelings of the persons serving as research subjects (Bronfenbrenner, 1976a) as primary data sources; it requires that the process of investigation involve "looking through a microscope and a telescope at the same time" (Woods, 1983, p. 180), and it requires that the researcher not only study people, but also learn from people (Stryker, 1980). It allows access to the way teachers and students make sense of each other (McDermott, 1977).

To use a research method that would allow the researcher to go beyond description of teachers' perceptions of their work and working conditions was important. A method was needed that would allow the researcher to discover the meanings that teachers attached to specific factors in the context of teaching that ultimately influenced their sense of efficacy as teachers. The ethnographic interview method (Spradley, 1980) provided an appropriate vehicle to use to enter the thought processes of teachers and to discover information related to their sense of efficacy. The goal was not only to identify and describe contextual factors that influence teachers' attitudes but also to discover cultural themes that connected their attitudes to their actions and potential action.

This method was tested in 1984 when the researcher conducted a pilot study of teachers' sense of efficacy (McNeely, 1984) under the guidance of and based on the previous work of Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983). Results confirmed that further research was needed in the area of defining contextual factors that influence teachers' sense of efficacy, motivation, attitudes, and success. In the pilot study the researcher developed a model for conducting ethnographic interviewing based on Spradley's (1979) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) and arrived at a system through experience and trial-and-error testing of

ideas, techniques, and problem-solving in the field. Refinement of ethnographic techniques and procedures took place as the researcher became immersed in the literature and in the culture under study, a process characteristic of ethnographic research. The following is a presentation of the components of the research model.

The components of the model are the Journal, Organizational Strategies, Interviewing, Sociocultural Context, Participants, and Data Management. The Journal is a record of the ethnographic process--the "experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during field work" (Spradley, 1979, p. 76). In this study, the journal was the core of the research process and had several important functions. First, as Spradley (1979) discussed, it provided an ongoing chronology of activities and ideas associated with the needs of the study. Second, it served as the hub in the wheel from which all other components of the process emerged and to which they also converged. Third, it provided an overall framework upon which all activity in the ethnographic process was organized. The journal was not only the physical location of ideas, notes, raw interview data, field notes, and all information related to the study, it was also the single most important organizational element in the research process. It served as the procedural manual in which information was stored,

categorized, and cross-referenced. It contained the system whereby information pertinent to the various phases of the study could be retrieved for use in a particular aspect of the study.

The component, Organizational Strategies, listed mechanics, reminders, and techniques that helped make the research process more efficient, standardized, and workable. For instance, in the pilot study, the researcher devised several simple forms that made data collection and analysis more systematic and reliable (Appendices B and C)--a strategy recommended by Dobbert (1982). Developing the model was itself an organizational strategy. The aim was to account for and manage the ethnographic process and the contingencies that arose. Since ethnography is a time-intensive, multi-stage, multi-faceted process, organization is a key element in making it feasible.

Another component, Interviewing, contained information related to interview format and the formulation of interview questions. Developing interview questions was based on (a) the sociocultural context of teaching high school Spanish; (b) the construct of teachers' sense of efficacy; (c) teachers' comments; and (d) Spradley's (1979) discussion of descriptive, structural, and contrast questions. Examples of actual interview questions are located in Appendix B.

In order to schedule interviews the researcher contacted the teachers either by telephone or in person and briefly described the study (see Description of the Study for Participants in Appendix B) as a project investigating factors that influence teachers' sense of effectiveness. All teachers agreed to participate and interviews were scheduled at times and places of teachers' convenience. The researcher requested that the interviews be audiotaped and emphasized that confidentiality would be maintained and that names of informants would be known only to the researcher.

Descriptive questions were asked to encourage participants to talk about their work in their native language. In this sense, native language refers to the professional language as well as the cultural language of teachers. An example of a descriptive question for this study is, "Will you describe a typical day at school?"

Structural questions often required an explanation by the interviewer. They ask for specific information about an area the informant knows well and they aim to explore the ways in which informants organize their cultural knowledge. These questions were intended to substantiate or generate the constructs that respondents used in answers to descriptive questions (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). An example of a structural question for this study was, "What kinds of things make it difficult for you to feel

effective, based on your description of a typical day at school?"

Contrast questions aimed to discover the tacit relationships among answers participants have provided in descriptive and structural questions. They sought similarities and differences that accounted for the ways informants saw their teaching task. An example of a contrast question for this study was, "Earlier you mentioned that the issue of merit pay has affected your morale. Are there other issues that have had the same effect?"

Other questions, such as questions that sought to probe for more information, were also developed. It was important to construct the interview not as a question-answer session but to penetrate below the surface by asking questions such as "What do you mean by that?" and "Why do you feel that way?" In addition, interviewing by comment (Snow, Zurcher, & Sjoberg, 1982), that is, interviewing by making declarative statements intended to evoke a response, provided another tool to complement the interview process. One comment used was, "You seem to feel strongly about the importance of having your own classroom." Questions also evolved as the researcher gained understanding of informants' perspectives during the interview.

The researcher began each interview by describing the study (see Description of the Study for Participants in Appendix B) and asking an initial question such as "Will you describe a typical day for you here at school?" The researcher focused on eliciting information on the contextual factors that teachers believed positively and negatively influenced their effectiveness. The basic focus of describing factors in the context of teaching made the interviews similar in nature although no standardized set of questions were asked of all teachers.

After describing contextual factors, each teacher was asked to describe a particularly difficult situation that involved contextual factors this year teaching Spanish. The researcher then asked how that situation was managed and what the effects were on the teacher relative to feelings of effectiveness. Many times ideas that emerged in one interview found form as questions in a subsequent interview--a characteristic of the ethnographic interview process. The majority of the initial interviews lasted approximately two hours and several teachers were later recontacted to corroborate hunches, to clarify areas of doubt, and to secure additional information--also a characteristic of the ethnographic interview technique. Interviewing, then, provided the key and intimate connection between the exploration process and the inspection process (Blumer, 1969).



The component, Sociocultural Context, contained information about the cultural setting to anchor the study in the real life concerns of the day. According to Spindler (1982), participants' perceptions of the sociocultural context make their behavior sensible. A major part of the ethnographic task was to understand participants' sociocultural knowledge. Current national, state, and local issues, and work conditions that bore on the teaching profession in general and on the foreign language teaching profession in particular influenced teachers' sense of efficacy and feelings of effectiveness. It was important, therefore, to recognize generally the social and cultural milieu in which teachers lived and worked. A sociocultural perspective provided the background for the study.

For example, in the pilot study, one of the aims was to discover the sense of fairness that basic skills teachers had toward low-achieving students. When questioned about what they thought was fair evaluation of basic skills students compared with fair evaluation of other students, basic skills teachers brought up the issue of merit pay as an example of fairness in evaluation. Newspaper and magazine articles as well as television coverage of the issue were prominent at the time of the study. Hence, the sociocultural context had a direct bearing on the general research inquiry.

The component, Participants, contained demographic information about the individual teachers under study known only to the researcher as well as interview scheduling details. It is possible, however, for the researcher to describe the group as a whole without identifying individual informants or violating the ethical standards of ethnographic interview research. Twenty teachers participated in the study, all of the district's high school Spanish teachers in 1984-85. The majority were employed full-time. Not all teachers, however, taught Spanish full-time. Eight of the 20 taught other subjects including French, math, history, psychology, and German. Several teachers had additional responsibilities such as preparing students for the annual state high school Spanish competition, coaching athletics, serving as department chairperson, and being responsible for clubs and activities. Six teachers taught at the three rural schools, the remaining fourteen at the three city schools. Teachers' professional experience ranged from 1 year to 24 years with the majority of teachers having 10 to 12 years of experience.

Two males and 18 females ranging in ages from early twenties to late forties participated in this study. Five teachers considered themselves native speakers of Spanish and two were native speakers of other languages. Several non-native speakers considered themselves natively

bilingual because they had lived and studied in Spanish-speaking countries. The majority of teachers had advanced degrees and were qualified, some certified, to teach other languages including English as a second language. Three had advanced degrees in counselor education.

The component, Data Management, included data collection, analysis, synthesis, and interpretation techniques and procedures. The process of analyzing ethnographic data is multi-faceted, multi-stage, and labor-intensive. Therefore, techniques were adopted that accounted for data classification, control, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Spradley, 1979, 1980). This section discusses these data management characteristics.

Data were collected by interviewing the 20 high school Spanish teachers, audiotaping their comments and recording field notes using data collection tools developed in the pilot study (McNeely, 1984). Samples of these tools are located in Appendix B. Typed transcriptions of the audiotapes, hereinafter referred to as protocols, in addition to field notes, served as the primary sources of data.

Each interview generated an average of 30 pages of typed, double-spaced raw data. Field notes were recorded before and after each interview to describe each interview situation and to account for additional teachers' comments

that were not recorded. Teachers often made pertinent comments immediately before and after interviews. These comments were recorded as field notes and were analyzed as raw data. Two interviews were conducted by telephone as a convenience to the teachers and in these cases notes were recorded at length by the researcher.

The process of data analysis involves discovering participants' rules, maps, and plans (Spradley, 1972) that account for their thoughts and behavior. A major task for researchers is to formulate the tacit rules and sets of instructions that informants have that influence their thoughts and behavior. In this study, data analysis consisted of four phases, domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and theme analysis (Spradley, 1979, 1980).

Domain analysis is the search of the protocols for categories of meaning. The researcher identified these categories by reading the protocols and listening to the audiotapes using what Spradley (1979) terms "universal semantic relationships" (p. 111) in a sorting and classification system searching for Kinds of Things, Parts of Things, Results of Things, Reasons for Things, Places for Doing Things, Uses of Things, Ways of Doing Things, Stages in Things, and Characteristics of Things.

In this study, domain analysis was begun after transcription of the first protocol and continued

throughout the study. Examples of domains from the first protocol were Kinds of Factors Teachers Describe as Contextual and Ways Teachers Deal with Problems Relating to Contextual Factors. The researcher, using the format developed in the pilot study (see Domain Analysis Worksheet in Appendix C), was able to identify the domains that were important for this study. Domain analysis enabled the researcher to isolate the fundamental units of cultural knowledge, in this case the ways high school Spanish teachers organize what they know about their work and its effect on their judgment of their ability to teach. A sample of domain analysis of raw data appears in Appendix C.

Taxonomic analysis is the search for how the domains are organized and related to each other. The researcher looks for similarities and differences among domains and how domains compare with one another. For example, the domain, Kinds of Factors Teachers Describe as Contextual, was a large domain that included factors at many levels. Teachers described factors at the classroom level, the school level, the district level, and so on. Within these levels, more levels appeared. At the school level, some contextual factors were support of the principal, support of the guidance counselors, and support of colleagues. The taxonomy demonstrates the levels and sublevels of the factors teachers identified as influencing their

effectiveness. The taxonomy emerged illustrating the organization of domains and representing the cultural knowledge of the informants. This taxonomy is located in Appendix C.

Componential analysis is the search for the characteristics of domains, the attributes of the contextual factors. When a factor was identified in the context of teaching, the meaning of that factor and the attributes that were associated with it were then determined. Componential analysis involved charting information about factors that appeared during data analysis using eight steps recommended by Spradley (1979).

Theme analysis is a search for recurrent themes or patterns of behavior as they become evident through data sorting, classification, and analysis. In ethnography, a theme is defined as "a postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society" (Opler, 1945, p. 198). Dobbert defined pattern as "the organization or structure behind behavior. A pattern is not the behavior itself, nor is it in the behavior. A pattern is inferred from . . . recurrence of the behavior" (1982, p. 39). Themes or patterns unify the domains and relate cultural information to a larger social context. In this study, the themes recurred across domains that related

high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy with the contextual factors of their teaching environment.

Writing the ethnographic account, the presentation of the research findings, consisted of translating the process of discovering meanings into general statements and cultural themes that characterized the group under study. In order for the reader to see the life of the teachers as they saw and described it themselves, the ethnographic account provides excerpts from the protocols that illustrate how themes emerged.

This chapter has thus far discussed the research perspective and the research method that enabled the researcher to capture high school Spanish teachers' perceptions of contextual factors that they believed influenced their capability to perform as teachers. The following section discusses the methodological issues related to data collection and analysis in this study: (a) researcher qualifications and biases, (b) interviewing, and (c) validity of the findings.

### Methodological Issues

In qualitative research and specifically ethnographic interviewing, the qualifications, beliefs, and interests of the researcher are important at every level of research. Qualifications equip the researcher with the professional and technical expertise to conduct the inquiry. Beliefs and interests delineate the researcher's world view or

basic assumptions about the nature of human behavior that lead to a particular research approach. These characteristics may also create areas of potential bias in the conduct of research. Ethnographic analysis must incorporate a process of researcher self-monitoring and disciplined subjectivity (Erickson, 1973) that exposes all phases of the research activity to continual questioning and reevaluation (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The researcher-as-key-instrument is vital in qualitative or naturalistic research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Eisner, 1979, 1984; Wolcott, 1976). The following researcher experiences were considered to be relevant:

1. Bachelor's and master's degrees in foreign language education provided background and training enabling the researcher to understand better the perspective of the participants.

2. Previous experience as a high school foreign language teacher in the school district where this study was conducted enabled the researcher to understand the context out of which the problem of high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy arose. Experience as a teacher also aided the researcher in interviewing participants not only from the perspective of a researcher but also from the perspective of a high school Spanish teacher.

3. Living, traveling, and working in countries outside of the United States contributed to the



researcher's belief in the importance of foreign language education and multicultural awareness.

4. Doctoral level training in foreign language education and bilingual-multicultural education including coursework in linguistics and teaching English as a second language enabled the researcher to understand and apply current theoretical and practical knowledge of second language acquisition, second language learning, and foreign language education to the research problem in this study.

5. Doctoral level training and specialization in qualitative educational research and ethnographic methodology including coursework in cultural anthropology and counseling and interviewing techniques provided the researcher with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct naturalistic, ethnographic interviewing.

6. Development of a research model (McNeely, 1984) and experience in applying the model in a pilot study of teachers' sense of efficacy using the research method of ethnographic interview enabled the researcher to apply, refine, and revise techniques that aided in the operation of the present study.

7. Extensive reading on integrating qualitative inquiry and methodology in the field of instruction and curriculum, as evidenced by the entries in the reference

list of this study, added depth to the researcher's knowledge.

8. Belief in the importance of the quality of teachers' world of work provided the researcher with the desire to search for a research perspective and research method that would accommodate teachers' perceptions of their teaching experience.

9. A symbolic-interactionist perspective enabled the researcher to see the work of teachers as a process of balancing personal and professional goals and expectations with past and future actions and interactions in the context of teaching. Symbolic interactionism illustrates the researcher's view of the nature of human behavior as reflexive, interactive, reciprocally determined, and influenced by context and self-constructed meanings. According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984), the researcher's knowledge of theory should guide data collection and analysis. The investigator's view of social organization "inevitably structures fieldwork inquiry and the reality portrayed in the description it yields" (Dorr-Bremme, 1985, p. 80).

10. Characteristics of qualitative researchers fit the researcher's self-perception: a cross-cultural perspective (Dobbert, 1982), the "courage not to understand" (Reik, 1949, p. 503), an "inquiring attitude into the nature of things" (Parkay, 1983, p. 3), an

interest in the inner or subjective understanding of human behavior (Rist, 1979), and a penchant for organization and detail (Spradley, 1979).

The researcher's interests are also important in qualitative research because the researcher's general thinking might have bearing on the form or quality of the data (Dobbert, 1982). The conceptualization of a qualitative study investigating foreign language teachers' perceptions of their work was in part the result of the discovery of similarities in the literatures of diverse disciplines. For instance, Dewey's discussion of deliberation as "an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses to see what the resultant action would be like if it were entered upon" (1922, p. 190) and Thomas' "definition of the situation" (1937, p. 8) were consonant with Bandura's discussion of cognitive appraisal in sense of efficacy (1977a) and social learning theory (1977b). Behavior is influenced by reciprocal, reflexive, and interacting factors in one's environment. Blumer's (1969) theory of symbolic interactionism and Stryker's (1980) discussion of its importance in sociology also paralleled aspects of cognitive appraisal and coping theories of Bandura (1977b) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

Woods' (1983) interactionist view of sociology in educational settings with its focus on how teachers make

sense of their world and how they perceive their effectiveness was consonant with views of Goodlad (1984) and Tikunoff and Vázquez-Farías (1982). These authors agreed that the quality of education is dependent upon the interaction between teachers and the circumstances in which they teach. All of these views took form as a research method through Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interview technique. Eisner's (1979) discussion of "educational connoisseurship" (p. x) maintains that the language we use promotes a view, a way of looking at things that allows us to make sense of the world. This "world view" (Doda, 1982, p. 2) also illustrates the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Hickerson, 1980; Whorf, 1956) in anthropological linguistics that habitual or native language influences the way people think and perceive reality.

These links among philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, education, and linguistics provided direction to the study by helping the researcher broadly conceptualize human behavior from different perspectives and verify the importance of investigating meaning-making in the context of human interaction from the participants' point of view.

The above discussion is evidence of the researcher's awareness that measures must be included to control for potential bias. The following section discusses these measures.

In qualitative research, specifically the ethnographic interviewing of foreign language teachers, in which the role of researcher is crucial, special measures are needed to insure validity (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966). In addition to validity measures involving methodological techniques, the following control measures were intended to correspond to and counterbalance the researcher's qualifications and beliefs.

Throughout this study the researcher followed the Principles of Professional Responsibility adopted by the American Anthropological Association in 1971 noted in Spradley (1979, pp. 34-39). These principles are that the researcher must consider informants first; safeguard informants' rights, interests, and sensitivities; communicate research objectives; protect the privacy of informants; never exploit informants; and make reports available to informants. The researcher also made use of Reynolds' (1982) strategies for resolving ethical issues in social science research. These issues include consideration of participants' rights, the practical and theoretical benefits of the research activity, and the potential risks to participants. For instance, teachers were assured of anonymity. Excerpts from the protocols are not identified as to name, age, sex, or school of participant. Fictitious identities are used in protocol excerpts to insure anonymity. Another control measure

related to the researcher's qualifications was that the researcher continued to collaborate with the advisors on the pilot study and with colleagues who were also conducting ethnographic research as recommended by Eisner (1984).

In addition to addressing the potential effects of researcher qualifications, the researcher addressed problems inherent in interviewing that were relevant to the present study. Denzin (1978) describes three problems associated with interviewing: (a) the difficulty of penetrating a group's language, (b) the resistance of participants to disclose information, and (c) the relationship between interviewer and participant. The following discussion addresses each of these topics.

As a former high school Spanish teacher, the researcher understood the group's language, yet the researcher also probed for clarification and explication during interviews in order to insure that teachers' individual words would be on record. The researcher found no obvious instances of teachers' hesitance to disclose information. In fact, the excerpts cited in the findings display unusual candor. In addition, there were many instances in which teachers emphasized that comments be strictly confidential because information given to some administrators relative to career changes, for example, differed from what teachers shared with the researcher.

With respect to rapport, the researcher experienced positive interactions with participants. The fact that the total population of high school Spanish teachers voluntarily participated in the study is indicative of their willingness. Several teachers commented on the cathartic effect of discussing their work and feelings of effectiveness.

In addition, the researcher made a conscious effort to remain neutral verbally and non-verbally as an interviewer and made no editorial comment based on experience as a high school Spanish teacher or professional acquaintance with some of the teachers. The researcher made it a point not to ask leading questions of informants or use terms that might automatically direct the interview.

Validity is another key methodological issue in qualitative research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Rist, 1975; Spindler, 1982; Tikunoff & Ward, 1980; Trueba, 1981-82). Measures must be taken to insure that findings represent the reality of the context studied (Spindler, 1982). Several of these measures have been discussed. Discussion of additional measures follows.

The researcher standardized the interview process and recording of field notes as much as possible by use of the data collection items listed in Appendix B following the "audit trail" recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 186)--a continuing review of procedures and data to insure

that methods are appropriate to the study and are properly carried out. In order to insure that statements based on data analysis represented the entire group, the researcher interviewed the entire population of high school Spanish teachers of one southeastern school district during the 1984-85 school year.

A second control was audiotaping the interviews to insure verbatim data collection. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) have noted that excerpts directly from informant interviews, the major data source, are the empirical categories of participants and are less abstract than many instruments used in traditional research designs. Audiotaping permitted availability of verbatim data. In addition to reading and analyzing the transcriptions, the researcher found it useful to listen to the audiotapes to be able to recapture the atmosphere of the interview and to call to mind instances in which teachers' non-verbal communication flavored their remarks.

That audiotaping would distract or influence informants (Dobbert, 1982) is possible. However, foreign language teachers are accustomed to using tape recorders since they use them daily in their work; therefore, the presence of the recorder was not novel, distracting, or limiting. Throughout data analysis, careful reliance on informants' actual statements as suggested by Little (1982) constituted a check on potential researcher bias.



As discussed in chapter I, the participants were high school Spanish teachers in one southeastern school district during the 1984-85 school year. While participants had their own unique perspectives of their judgment of ability to teach, they all had certain characteristics in common--the Spanish language, the high school level of teaching, and the school district. These characteristics insured a degree of comparability and translatability, important considerations in ethnographic research. Validity rests with how well the life of those being studied is captured and the checks and balances to insure this. Keeping in mind that the goal of ethnographic research was to capture the reality of the subjects (Spindler, 1963), certain measures were employed to raise the chances of capturing that reality.

The researcher followed guidelines suggested by Dean and Whyte to account for questions such as, "How do you know if the informant is telling the truth?" and "How much does the informant's report correspond in fact to objective reality?" (1958, p. 34). Regarding these particular questions, they suggest that the researcher instead attempt to answer the question "What do the informant's statements reveal about his feelings and perceptions and what inferences can be made from them about the actual environment or events he has experienced?" (p. 38).

In addition, charting the multi-stage cyclical process of interviewing, analyzing, reinterviewing, and reanalyzing was another organizational feature that provided what Eisner calls "structural corroboration" (1984, p. 198). This activity provided coherence of bits of information that add up to the whole. For example, the researcher charted the numbers of times individual contextual factors were identified and described by participants. A hierarchy of importance and power was demonstrated for each contextual factor relative to the others. This charted hierarchy was used to determine the status of a factor as a valid finding of the study. This process also identified areas for further corroboration with participants whereby information was added and/or clarified.

The researcher also applied inductive procedures (Denzin, 1978) to account for what Becker terms "negative evidence" (1970, p. 34)--another procedure characteristic of qualitative research that contributes to the validity of the findings. For instance, for each contextual factor identified and described by the participant, the researcher searched the protocol for all instances where the particular factor was mentioned and attempted to find contradictory statements that would minimize or negate the value of a factor. This search for counter evidence served as a check and balance system to evolving themes and hunches.

Triangulation of methods and data served to insure validity. Unobtrusive measures such as the collection of archives, interviewing the supervisor of foreign language education of the school district, and interviewing other teachers of foreign language in the school district provided checks and balances of the interview data. The researcher also informally interviewed a district principal and teachers of other subject areas to verify observations of the context of teaching in the school district during the time in which the study took place.

Webb et al. (1966) recommend collection and study of unobtrusive data in the form of archives relevant to the sociocultural context as one means of anchoring an inquiry to a real life problem. In general, unobtrusive measures are any data that minimize the possibility of researcher bias (Denzin, 1978; Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979; Webb et al., 1966; Wolcott, 1976). For instance, in the pilot study the researcher noted that many times teachers made specific references to media information to illustrate points during the interview. Archives such as pertinent newspaper and magazine articles and even poignant cartoons as well as school district policy pamphlets and other information were collected by the researcher throughout the 1984-85 school year for the present study. These archives were a reference point from which some teachers based answers to interview questions. These unobtrusive data provided

insight into participants' perspectives and the cultural setting in which they taught. They served to insure "referential adequacy" (Eisner, 1984, p. 198)--a determination by the researcher that the data indeed illuminate the cultural scene the way participants describe it.

The researcher interviewed the district supervisor of foreign language education in a two-hour, audiotaped interview, and informally in person and by telephone. These discussions took place throughout the study and provided a means by which certain teacher interview data were corroborated. In addition, the researcher interviewed other teachers of foreign language both in the district where the study was conducted and in other districts. These interviews also aided in substantiating the data.

According to Tikunoff and Ward, external validity can be established by using "logical-situational generalizability" (1980, p. 281). That is, by providing in-depth, descriptive information about teachers and the ecology of the social system in which they teach, contexts may be identified that are similar to those in which the research was conducted. In this way, new knowledge can be generalized to other locales based on specific similarities and differences. Context, then, serves as the vehicle for external validity (Trueba, 1981-82). In this study, the

richness and depth of description and verbatim data recording provided a means to establish external validity.

### Summary

The first section of this chapter presented the research perspective offered by a qualitative approach to educational research as discussed by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Bolster (1983), Dewey (1922, 1938), Eisner (1979, 1984), Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Guba and Lincoln (1981); Rist (1979), Rogers (1984), and Sherman, Webb, and Andrews (1984). This qualitative perspective was grounded in the theory of symbolic interactionism discussed by Blumer (1969), Denzin (1978), Stryker (1980), and Woods (1983, 1984).

The second section of this chapter presented the research method, the ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979), and the research model developed by the researcher in a pilot study of teachers' sense of efficacy (McNeely, 1984) that were compatible with the research perspective. The researcher described the components of the research model and presented illustrations of each component as an integral part of the cyclical nature of ethnographic research in general and of this study in particular. A final section of the chapter discussed the methodological issues of researcher qualifications, interviewing, and validity in qualitative research.

## CHAPTER IV FINDINGS

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify, describe, and analyze factors in the context of teaching that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy. A qualitative, interactionist research perspective (Blumer, 1969) using ethnographic interviewing (Spradley, 1979) provided a vehicle to discover contextual factors that influenced teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness in the workplace. The researcher focused data analysis on factors identified by the population of 20 high school Spanish teachers in one southeastern school district during the 1984-85 school year. This chapter presents the findings based on an organizational framework and ecological approach to educational research (Bronfenbrenner, 1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1979) defined in terms of teachers' sense of efficacy (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983). The following is a discussion of this framework.

### The Ecological Framework

Research by Ashton, Webb, and Doda suggests that teachers' sense of efficacy is "reciprocally and multiply

determined by a complex and interrelated system of variables" (1983, p. 17) and requires a research perspective that reflects this complexity. The ecological approach to educational research proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1976a) provided an analytical structure that helped accommodate the dynamics of teaching. Bronfenbrenner described the educational environment as a "nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next" (1976a, p. 5), consisting of four systems--the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. Because teachers' sense of efficacy is "susceptible to many interactive influences, including personal, student, organizational, political, economic, collegial, and administrative influences" (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983, p. iii), Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach offered a framework that was compatible with investigating teachers' sense of efficacy.

The four systems were defined relative to teachers' sense of efficacy:

The microsystem consists of the teachers' immediate setting, typically the classroom or school.

The mesosystem is comprised of the interrelations among the teachers' major settings.

The exosystem refers to the formal and informal social structures that influence the teachers' immediate setting, including the socioeconomic level of the community, the nature of

the school district, the mass media, the state and national legislative agencies.

The macrosystem consists of the predominant cultural beliefs and ideologies that have an impact on teacher thought and behavior or on the various other systems impinging on teachers.

(Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983, 17-18)

Although the ecological framework was suggested as a result of previous research, the wide variety of contextual factors that teachers identified emerged from the data collected during the ethnographic interview process. Findings of the present study are discussed in terms of the four systems and are documented by excerpts from protocols and pertinent research literature that support the importance of the findings for teachers' sense of efficacy. Excerpts provide access to the participants' reality and are statements that characterize their perceptions. A major contribution of this study lies in the naturalistic, qualitative reporting of teachers' perceptions; hence, the inclusion of an ample number of excerpts is seen as important not only to validate the study but also to emphasize participants' reality as they saw it. The several representative examples quoted to illustrate teachers' perceptions do not comprise the total number of examples but are representative of teachers' comments. The significance of subjective perceptions lies in the statement "if men define situations as real, they



are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 572).

Following the presentation of findings in each system is a discussion of the contextual factors relative to the broader implications for teachers' sense of efficacy. Although not every teacher cited every factor or discussed factors with equal intensity, the distribution of identified factors represents the group as a whole.

### Microsystem Factors

Teachers' immediate work settings--the classroom and the school--contained a myriad of factors that influenced teachers' sense of efficacy. In addition to documentation in chapter II, research has suggested that factors in immediate surroundings have more influence on teachers than impersonal knowledge about innovation and research (Berman, Greenwood, McLaughlin, & Puncius, 1975; House, 1971; Kounin, 1977). In the present study, teachers identified and described factors in their immediate settings that they perceived to be important to their sense of efficacy. These factors are cited and discussed in the following sections in terms of (a) the nature of classes, (b) the nature of the physical settings, and (c) teacher role definition.

#### The Nature of Classes

Several contextual factors in their immediate classroom settings were cited by teachers as affecting

their sense of efficacy. These factors were class size; number and type of preparations; combined age, grade, and ability levels; combined language levels; degree of lesson continuity; and student success.

Class size was a factor identified by most teachers as important to their ability to be effective. Teachers believed that class size is particularly important in foreign language classes where the emphasis should be on developing and measuring oral and aural proficiency skills of each child. Teachers expressed concern about their ability to be effective in classes of more than 25 students since contact time with students was described as a necessary requirement in foreign language classes where the lecture format is not the norm. The following excerpts are an indication that teachers believed that small classes (fewer than 20 students) strengthened their sense of effectiveness.

My classes this year are a good size. Except for one class I have under 20 students. My best size class is my smaller Spanish I class. It has 15 kids in it. It's just the right number, it's perfect. It's just enough that they're not all on the spot at once. When you have a class of five or six kids everybody's constantly ready. And that makes some kids real nervous but with this size class there's a lot of interaction. They can talk with each other. And it's not too many for me to be able to communicate with and to reach. The class where I have 22 kids, on the other hand, I feel that's starting to get too big. Most of the teachers I know have 30 and 35 kids in the class. That's impossible. Kids cannot learn. Kids in those classes are learning to fill in the blank with the correct verb form

and they're learning to answer questions on paper, but they'll never learn to speak in that size class.

A class of around 20 is ideal. When you're doing your conversational drill, you can personally have eye contact with every student and converse so that everyone is involved. I had one class this year that started at 25 and grew to 36 by the end of the year. Something happens after you go over 30. When you're doing the oral drill it seems like you just can't get everybody in.

I had 37 in here. All first year beginning Spanish. Now that's impossible. We all know that classes should be no more than 20, 15 is better. But I had 37 in here. Now I lost a lot of them, a lot of them didn't want to be here, and a lot of them didn't do anything when they got here.

In groups of 30 it's harder. I won't say it's impossible, but it's harder.

It used to be especially in foreign language you had somewhere between 20 and 25, maximum 25 students. And now, well the maximum is 35 and that's because state mandates that. We regularly have 33 to 35 in a class. That's too many. You can control the students, you can teach the students, but it's not the same calibre of education that they were getting a few years ago.

I had two Spanish I classes and one was real big, about 30, and the other had only 17 or 18, and so there was not very good planning that way. I talked to the counselor and I said, "These classes are too big." She said, "Well, the guidelines say 35" and I said, "Yes, sure, 35 students where you lecture may be o.k., but when you're trying to get kids to participate it's very hard to have 35 students." They tell you, "Yeah, well 35 students is reasonable. What are you complaining about? You only have 32." I feel that if I have another experience like the one this year, I'll leave public schools. I

enjoy teaching, but I have to think of the result.

Research supports the notion that class size is important. Hall (1977) discussed the importance of the relationships among people in a working group to maximize the talents of each member and suggested that groups of between 8 and 12 are ideal for a working group; Glass and Smith (1979) concluded in a meta-analysis of research on class size and achievement that a strong, positive relationship exists, especially at the secondary school level. Goodlad (1984) also reported that teachers listed class size as a reason for student lack of motivation, frustration at not being attended to, and resentment. Teachers in the present study agreed with the conclusion of some reports (Klein, 1985) that, in order to maximize teaching and learning, classes must be small.

No single factor such as class size accounted for teachers' overall perceptions of their sense of efficacy. Teachers saw class size as only one factor that influenced their sense of effectiveness, but an important factor when found in combination with other factors. One teacher, for example, mentioned that one of her most successful experiences was with a large class (over 30 students), but she attributed success to other factors such as the homogeneity of student age and ability in the class.

There is a need for smaller class size in foreign language but they can't hire enough personnel to have those small class numbers. Smaller classes would help solve a lot of problems, but I don't think it's going to solve the whole problem. There are so many things that enter into being able to be an effective teacher in any one class.

They say their statistics show that statewide foreign language classes are not too large, but I don't buy that. I know too many teachers who complain about these classes with 30 and 35 kids and it's just impossible for each kid to get in much oral work, not to mention being physically impossible for a teacher.

Another teacher added,

It is physically tiring if you are really speaking the language the whole period, your mouth gets tired, your face is tired. Your facial muscles are absolutely exhausted trying to converse with that many kids all day every day. Eventually your mind just hits a state where something closes down.

A second factor in the context of teaching that teachers believed influenced their effectiveness was number and type of preparations. Spanish is offered at five levels in secondary schools from a beginning level to advanced levels. Advanced Placement and other advanced classes are available at some schools. A nonacademic conversational course is also offered at some schools. Teachers may request levels they prefer to teach, but often it is not feasible to honor those requests. Where there were several teachers of Spanish in one school, teachers felt that having seniority in the school gave them an

advantage in teaching assignments. In all teaching situations, however, teachers cited number of preparations, whether teaching preferred levels or not, as a factor. Teachers considered the various levels (Spanish I, II, III, IV and V) to be equivalent to separate courses since separate preparations were needed.

I had five classes this year in four different rooms and four preparations. I had Spanish I and II, two classes of American history and one class of sociology and psychology. I was aware all year of being unable to prepare adequately for my Spanish classes, but I just didn't have enough time.

This year I had three preparations, but I also teach three languages. I have one hour of French, one hour of Spanish, and three hours of German.

I have three levels of Spanish--I, II and III. And the Spanish II is really divided into two classes, the slower class and the faster class so I really have four preparations every day. But to an administrator, Spanish I and IV are the same thing; it's just Spanish, isn't it? [teacher laughing].

Numbers and types of preparations varied. A few teachers had only one preparation but the majority had two or more.

I'm lucky this year, I only have 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 4 . . . 4 preparations. That's lucky because last year I had more than that!

Teachers believed that there is little awareness of the fact that in general foreign language teachers have more preparations than other teachers. In addition, the type of

preparation was considered significant.

Once you get the kids in Spanish IV and Spanish V you don't go to a class without being over prepared in every way. You don't go into a class and think that you're going to read a story by Borjes and never have read it before or never have looked up all the words or studied it carefully. You can't do that. I probably spend on two classes five times as much time as I do for the other three. The essay papers that they write, the developing of tests. . . . At the lower levels, you're not testing the same kinds of things, the same style when you're doing the essays. When you're dealing with the upper level kids, so you only have 40 kids, two classes of 20, they take as much time as if I had 35 in each class, if not more.

Teachers also identified a third factor, combined age, grade, and ability levels of students in single classes. In the present study, it was not uncommon for teachers to describe classes, particularly beginning classes, containing students from 9th through 12th grades, ages 14 through 18, with varying levels of ability and academic preparation. One teacher commented, "I have 12th graders, 11th graders, and 9th graders in the same class and I am mentally and physically drained after that one class for the whole day." These combinations were the result of students' electing Spanish at varying stages of their high school careers. Teachers reported that this factor made it difficult to accommodate students' needs based on developmental stage and available curriculum materials.

I had from 9th grade to seniors. I had three seniors and about 28 9th graders and one 11th

grader. The age gap is incredible and the maturity level makes a big difference. Later on in life it doesn't matter but those four years difference at the high school level really matter a lot if we want to teach them effectively.

It was a relatively new phenomenon for many foreign language teachers to have students who were low achieving due to poor academic skills or low academic achievement.

I think it's disastrous to combine levels of students. Because you're teaching to the middle and your high students are going to get bored and they're not going to perform at their level, they're going to drag their feet. The low students are going to give up. I think that's going to always be a problem.

Student ability level was a described factor in the context of teaching that influenced teachers' sense of effectiveness. Research has confirmed the importance of this student characteristic (Good & Brophy, 1984; Prawat & Jarvis, 1980), and teachers in the present study identified this factor as particularly significant in light of recent changes in the state and district foreign language program. Contrary to past policies, students of all ability levels were encouraged to enroll in foreign language classes during the 1984-85 school year with little adjustment in curriculum materials and teacher training.

Traditionally high school foreign language classes had been filled by students of average and above-average ability. Teachers' training in content and methodology reflected that tradition. However, a policy opening



foreign language study to all students affected teachers' sense of efficacy primarily because, as teachers stated, they had had no training and little experience in teaching foreign language to low-achieving students.

It's hard in high school. Once you get these kids in high school, motivating kids that already have such a negative attitude toward learning and school, it's hard. [To students] Everything is so boring. I find that that's the word. The word of the 80's . . . boring. I can bring in some materials . . . interesting, exciting, show them filmstrips and movies. I showed them a movie on the Louvre and out of a class of 25 I had maybe two or three that thought it was worthwhile watching, the rest, "It's boring." It doesn't leave you with a positive feeling. Well, at a certain point I thought, "What am I doing wrong? Why are these kids so bored?"

I even tried lowering my standards but toward the end I felt that it was probably a mistake. As a result I had more kids that passed, but it leaves me with a feeling that they haven't really learned anything. I think the more you lower the standards, the less they'll do. You've got to keep them on their toes. For instance, spelling is awful. Kids couldn't spell and in my first quizzes I tried to get them to give me words spelled in the target language. They would just get awful scores, they just couldn't do that. So I tried matching English to Spanish. But I think if I had to do it all over again, I would try and make it a mixture of the two. Still give some answers where they have to spell in the target language. Go ahead and produce something instead of passively matching things.

Concomitant with the combined age, grade, and ability levels is a fourth factor, combined language levels. A standard practice, according to the teachers interviewed, was to combine levels of Spanish, particularly advanced levels, to maintain a standard pupil-teacher ratio.

Teachers were concerned about not being able to accomplish as much in multilevel classes as in unilevel classes. This practice has been documented as a concern of foreign language teachers (T. Cooper, 1985).

In combined classes you don't have that same kind of command. You don't feel like you're progressing the way you want to because you have two different groups. You may be working with one group and you want to make sure the other group is working effectively and efficiently and it's very frustrating.

This is the first year that they've separated Spanish IV and V. I suspect that next year they'll be back together again. There are not enough kids from Spanish IV who are not seniors who will be able to go on to Spanish V. It's always better to teach them separately.

I hate combining levels because I feel like the kids get short changed and I get divided in half. I can only spend half of the amount of time with these kids and the other half with this group. And so I feel like they get half a year's worth instead of a full year's worth. And that's a shame. It's a shame that we have a school system where we can't support a class of five if we have to.

A fifth factor cited by teachers concerned circumstances that affected the degree of lesson continuity--interruptions, interferences, and distractions. Throughout the course of a day teachers' lessons were interrupted by announcements on the public address system, hand-delivered messages from teachers and administrators, and unscheduled events such as pep rallies. Students were often out of class--absences,

testing, extracurricular activities, doctors' appointments, and field trips. Student behavior was described as a distraction especially in large first year classes with students of all ability levels. The importance of these factors in influencing teachers' sense of efficacy is also supported by research (Denham & Michael, 1981; Kounin & Doyle, 1965).

The thing that stands out that hinders my teaching the most is the interruptions-- assemblies, other activities going on that interfere with the course of learning. You need to have that repetition and that practice and concentration in teaching and learning a foreign language. When you're interrupted four or five times during a period for various reasons, or if there is something else occurring, which is usual in a high school, the chain of events is interrupted. I find that to be a real problem. Either kids are called down to guidance or for testing or assembly or for disciplinary reasons. The high school just offers too many activities and these activities interfere with the classes.

You find that an awful lot of kids are gone for an awful lot of things.

There are too many interruptions even though I think they try to keep it to a minimum. The ones I find real upsetting are at the last five minutes of the class when you have the lesson down to the last five minutes. You're at a crucial point where you're summing everything up and you need those extra minutes. We also have a problem of finding out about an assembly or something the morning of. I have a real hard time dealing with that.

A final factor, student success, was described unanimously by teachers as a positive factor that

influenced their sense of efficacy by helping compensate for negative factors.

I have had one experience with a kid this year that was really rewarding. I'm thinking about writing a letter and tell those people in charge of the Raise program how much some of these kids have gotten out of that program. This kid was given the most improved award in my class and just simply on his sincerity and attention he gives me during class. Now he doesn't turn in homework assignments and he gets F's on tests, but when it comes to oral work he answers questions, he asks questions, and he's there. He got that award and I've never seen a kid happier about getting a little piece of metal and it just kind of choked me up. He wrote in my yearbook that I was the one teacher that had shown him that he could do something if he tried. And that just means more to me than anything could.

I have reached an awful lot of kids who have had difficulty because of personality problems or other kinds of problems of doing this work and understanding.

Teachers described student success, not only academic achievement, but also emotional and maturational development and security, as important to their sense of effectiveness. Teachers noted that a great deal of time was devoted to helping students deal with personal and academic problems--a primary reason they like the teaching profession.

Teachers also described the effect of lack of student success, specifically student achievement, as a major influence on their sense of efficacy, supporting previous findings (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983;

Berman et al., 1977). The majority of teachers in the present study, however, maintained that students could be taught and that they, the teachers, could teach (characteristics of highly efficacious teachers), but that classroom and school conditions as well as administrative policies and procedures thwarted their efforts. A specific example will be discussed in a later section of these findings.

This section has discussed six factors in the nature of classes that teachers identified as important to their sense of efficacy. The following section discusses factors in the physical setting.

#### The Nature of the Physical Setting

Need for one classroom was cited by most teachers as the single most important factor relative to the physical setting that influenced their sense of efficacy. In general, teachers felt unable to perform effectively if they taught in several locations in the school. In addition, although standard classrooms were generally available for Spanish classes, some teachers taught in portable buildings and auditoriums. Few teachers were able, however, to remain in a single classroom the entire time they taught. This was especially true for teachers who were new to the school, according to their observations. Location of the room, condition of the furnishings and language laboratory, presence of windows,

cleanliness of classrooms, and overall aesthetic atmosphere were also mentioned as contextual factors.

I'm locked up in a room that has no windows. I'm stuck here for all these hours and it's not a very pleasant feeling, that closed-in feeling. There's nothing that enhances the atmosphere. I have a bare room with horrible furniture. Even the students complain about the furniture. I worked at another school that had art works, sculptures in the school that gave the school a very pleasant atmosphere. This place is so sterile and cold. It really has a negative effect on me.

Lack of access to a single classroom throughout the day and teaching in several locations in the school were referred to as "floating," "roaming," and "traveling." The existence of this phenomenon in the context of teaching has been also documented in the literature (Bloom, 1978; Boyer, 1983) and is supported by research in instructional design relative to the importance of accommodating student characteristics (Kemp, 1971, 1985; Mullally, 1977). One part-time teacher, however, enjoyed "floating" because "it gives me a chance to move around and see other people during the day." However, the majority of teachers found few advantages to "floating":

I have taught in a total of four different classrooms in opposite ends of the building. You have to carry all your materials with you. If you're sharing a room with the teacher who has that room most of the day, you can't put up Spanish things. And even if you do, it's just great effort. I was advised not to put up realia, to decorate the room in any way, because it would be a waste. So for many, many reasons,

it's nice to have one's own classroom and it is handicapping not to have one's own classroom. I would have used more realia and more visual effects and probably have shown more films and more of those extras.

I floated this year--even had one class in the auditorium where the acoustics were terrible. There was such an echo it was difficult to understand English. Half the seats were broken and the kids had to be scattered about. I floated all over this school this year. I was really discouraged.

### Teacher Role Definition

Perceived role definitions are likely to influence teachers' sense of efficacy (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983). The combination of factors described relative to the nature of classes and physical settings and student type contributed to teachers' role definitions in the present study. Specifically, these factors included large classes, often with combined language, age and grade levels; heavy preparation load; low degree of lesson continuity; and "floating."

Teachers who described themselves as "once enthusiastic and innovative" and "considered a good teacher where I worked before" used a variety of terms to describe their current roles: "primarily babysitter," "accountant," "record keeper," "fund raiser," "traveler," "truant officer," and "counselor." These roles were seen as being in addition to the role of teacher and "disseminator of information."

I feel like a babysitter sometimes. If we got paid babysitting hours, \$1 an hour for each kid we had, we'd make a whole lot more than we're making now. And that's \$1 an hour. We pay more than \$1 an hour for a babysitter. And yet they want us to teach them besides.

Sometimes I feel like foreign language teachers are like manpower employees. They look at you like, "Well, if we have the enrollment, we'll keep you." This is the situation here.

There was a wonderful line in a book that teachers are the lowliest foot sloggers in a vast bureaucratic army. And there are days when I am acutely aware of the veracity of that statement.

Perceptions of others also contributed to teachers' role definitions. Teachers described their role in terms of professional status as reflected in the mass media. This factor is discussed in a subsequent section.

An incident in one school in particular demonstrated the effect of role definition on teachers' sense of efficacy. Teachers accustomed to teaching academically oriented students and expecting achievement gains in classes experienced an increase in student failure during the 1984-85 school year in several classes that had been opened to students of all ability levels to accommodate the addition of a seventh period to the school day. In a group meeting called by the principal and attended by the district supervisor of foreign language education, the foreign language teachers were chastised for the failure increase. In an attempt to explain their perceptions of



the problem citing some of the contextual factors described previously, teachers were termed "prima donnas"--a role definition term that quickly found its way throughout the school district. During interviews with the researcher, these teachers expressed more anger and frustration than self-doubt about their ability as teachers. As they reported, teachers were confident of their teaching ability "under the circumstances" and made recommendations for possible solutions to increased student failure rate. They did not generally blame themselves for the problem; they blamed "the system" and administrators for "dumping low achieving students into Spanish classes whether they wanted to be there or not just because a 7th period was added to the school day." Teachers objected to the title, "prima donna," however, and reported that such labels affected their sense of efficacy.

#### Discussion of Findings Regarding Microsystem Factors and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

This discussion addresses the influence that factors in the microsystem had on teachers' sense of efficacy. In addition to identifying and describing the factors that positively and negatively influenced their sense of efficacy, many teachers reported general frustration, anger, anxiety, stress, and depression. As discovered during several interviews, questions about their effectiveness evoked exasperation and tearful explanations, especially when there were no career alternatives. When

asked how they felt about being termed "prima donnas," the teachers said they felt angry and demoralized. One teacher, who discussed the circumstances of her best friend who was also a participant in this study, said, "I think they're trying to drum her out of the system and that's really unfair because she's a hard-working teacher."

Teachers also discussed the coping strategies they employed and the rewards they gained in teaching that affected their feelings of effectiveness. Discussion of these areas evolved during interviews as teachers balanced positive and negative factors. For instance, one teacher who cited several microsystem factors that she perceived to be negative influences, concluded:

I want my own room, only three preparations and access to materials. I want teaching to be an uplifting experience and I know how good that can be. I'm willing to work on my deficiencies as a classroom manager but if teaching is not going to be rewarding, I can do other work and will if it becomes too disheartening. I'm burned out from struggling with things I shouldn't have to struggle with. But I certainly haven't given up on teaching.

Negative factors were balanced, however, by the positive factor of student success. Ironically, teachers' comments about the rewards of "reaching students" were more concise, yet just as emphatic as the more lengthy comments about the factors in the context of teaching that hindered their effectiveness. For example, even "under these awful conditions" teachers reported that they like students and

seeing them achieve, they like their subject, and they like teaching, yet many teachers reported significant frustration and stress associated with their specific teaching circumstances. These feelings appeared to contribute to a perception of ineffectiveness that may be unrelated to teaching and personal efficacy attitudes.

There were several noteworthy microsystem factors that the majority of teachers did not mention. School size and location, school hours (7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.), and student race and socioeconomic status were not identified. Discipline in classrooms, a factor that may be an expected microsystem factor, was described by teachers relative to the broader issue of the nature of the learner and is discussed as a factor in the macrosystem.

Students were generally discussed in terms of effort level rather than ability level; however, teachers acknowledged that combining ability levels had had a negative effect on their sense of effectiveness. Several teachers mentioned the strategy described in the following excerpt:

I still have some kids in Spanish who still don't understand what conjugating is. I aim at the middle and provide extra things for those slower kids and do the awful thing, say to yourself, "The faster kids can take care of themselves." I occasionally give them something when I remember them but they take care of themselves. Isn't that a shame? And that's how it works.

Combining language levels required other coping strategies:

Yesterday another Spanish teacher and I spent about an hour discussing how we would run that kind of class with the combination. For example, the first semester we'd have them working in separate books; the second semester we're going to put them in one book and have a review for Spanish IV. It'll be new material for Spanish III. With all the activities . . . it's a headache.

Finally, teachers discussed their sense of effectiveness relative to "the circumstances" in which microsystem factors interact:

Under the circumstances I think I've done the best I could, but my personal satisfaction . . . yes, I've done the best I could under the circumstances. I don't feel any guilt, I feel I've done the best I could under the circumstances, but as far as myself and my own standards are concerned, my own feelings about what is really appropriate, I feel, no, that it's substandard. I'm satisfied with what I could do under those circumstances but I just have these standards of excellence for a foreign language. We have to have standards, either that or we need to call it something else.

Now to me, if all my students aren't learning to the maximum of their ability, then I'm not doing quite as well as I should be doing. But I'm doing the best I know how right now under the circumstances and with my physical limitations of being a human being with finite limits.

In summary, microsystem factors in teachers' immediate work settings of classroom and school were described as important to teachers' sense of efficacy. Class size;

number and type of preparations; combined age, grade, and ability levels; degree of lesson continuity; and student success were cited as influential factors in the nature of classes. Factors in the nature of the physical setting were "floating" (moving to different classrooms throughout the day) and, to a lesser degree, location of the room, condition of the furnishings, cleanliness, and overall aesthetic atmosphere. Teachers' role definitions were influenced by a combination of the factors described above and by the status of teachers as perceived by others. The following section discusses factors at the level of the mesosystem.

#### Mesosystem Factors

Interrelations and interactions among settings and people provide the supporting links and processes of interchange that are important to sense of competence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Research on effective schools (Brookover et al., 1978; Cohen, 1981) and on effective teaching (Good & Brophy, 1984) has confirmed that school relations are important to consider regarding teachers' sense of efficacy. In the present study, the factors that teachers identified as influential are discussed in terms of (a) school norms, (b) school relations, and (c) decision-making structures.

### School Norms

Patterns, customary procedures, and mutual expectations create school norms or school culture. One school norm that teachers in the present study perceived was "floating," which was discussed in a previous section. Teachers identified this factor as an accepted practice for foreign language teachers, especially teachers new to the school. They readily admitted that they knew of no stated policy to this effect but they perceived it to be a tacit understanding. Teachers generally accepted the norm: "I'm low man on the totem pole because I just came in so I was one of several floating teachers this year," and "I felt lucky to get this job so I didn't complain because I had to be a traveling teacher." Bruner described a parallel notion in his study of American morale during World War II: "Dissatisfaction had rarely to do with the amount of sacrifice people had to make, so long as others were seen as sacrificing equally" (1983, pp. 42-43). Teachers new to the school, however, did express feelings of vulnerability and insecurity as a consequence of their perceived low status.

Other school norms teachers cited were assignments of "leftover" classes and additional responsibilities. These factors particularly influenced their sense of efficacy and feelings of being able to carry out their work as teachers. For instance, foreign language teachers have

traditionally been assigned "leftover" classes when there were not sufficient numbers of classes of the target language. Many teachers were angered about these assignments particularly when they were out of field. This topic has been of concern to educators (Rodman, 1985b). One teacher commented about his experience teaching American government, a course for which he was not certified and had had little background:

Well, I did not do a very good job so I did not have a sense of accomplishment, I just really didn't have the time or the energy or, frankly, the will. I didn't want to go out and read and read and read and read in order to teach American government. I felt dumped on. I've heard other foreign language teachers complain about having to teach P.E. or this or that.

In most schools teachers coached students to participate in the annual state Spanish competition, the Conferencia. The school culture and make-up of the student body seemed to determine the degree of participation in the competition. For instance, teachers in the three rural schools reported difficulty in recruiting students to participate in the state competition because rural students and parents often had other interests and obligations. Many teachers were expected to participate; indeed, many enjoyed the experience. However, many teachers shared the sentiments of this teacher:

Contests are a great help in motivating, they are. They can work as a benefit to motivating

students to take a foreign language and to want to learn it and want to continue learning it, but on the other hand, they turn into an obsession. And I've seen that with my colleagues. You spend inordinate amounts of time preparing these kids for recitals of a poem and yet you're neglecting the teaching of the foreign language. You're turning them into contest mongers. And I'm at a point where I'm saying, "Gee, is it really worth it, sending these kids to contest?" Especially when all they want to do is go to Wet n' Wild and go here and go there. It is a colossal effort to organize the fund raisers. It takes a great deal of time. You are exhausted and the time that should be going into your preparation to getting these kids to speak and getting them involved and active, that is taken away, because you spend so much time preparing kids for contest. It's all well and good to get the recognition, but if it's not going to serve the purpose of teaching them the language, then I don't really see the real need for doing it.

Other additional responsibilities that teachers cited were sponsoring clubs, arranging "tertulias," monitoring, record keeping, textbook management, report writing and other clerical work, and non-instructional "chores." The following excerpts illustrate teachers' views:

I have all this stuff to do and no time to get it done. The club thing has taken an awful lot of time, planning the banquet, issuing the tickets, getting the induction ceremony all arranged, it's just on and on and on. And having to give exams early to seniors means that I have to make extra arrangements for that. It's impossible to test them orally.

Book inventories, ordering information. I want to be asked what to order but to have to do all the paperwork to order it is sometimes a bit much. I absolutely feel that most of those things either don't need to be done or should be handled by someone who is in another capacity. Most of those things end up taking my time, time



that I'm not paid for. It's one thing when I volunteer time and it's another when somebody says, "You will have it done" and does not give me enough time to do it during my workday. And I will not, I refuse to take time out of my class when I'm supposed to be teaching my class. I've had teachers say, "Well, when you're doing book inventory, just give them a free day." I refuse to do that.

I don't think it's fair to ask a person to take home their job every night. It's not fair even if the person is well paid and less fair if the person is not well paid. But no matter how well paid, I think it would be unfair for them to expect me to do it. And we've had that. We've been given a thing on Friday at 3 p.m. and it's due Monday at 8 a.m. It hurts your family relationship. My wife has really, really been angry with me this year. But what happens in the long run from all the work and preparations, each kid gets less and less and less.

My planning period every day virtually is taken up with paperwork, forms I have to fill out or errands I have to run around the school, people I have to see. The biggest problem that I have with my effectiveness is not having enough planning time, time to grade papers, and time to plan more than a week in advance. I'm usually, maybe two weeks ahead of the kids if I'm lucky because I don't have the time to do anything.

Raising money for things like the conferences takes time. I'm the person who has to do that and I'd say for three or four weeks time I spent two hours a day just being an accountant. They asked me to be in charge of the Conferencia.

School norms, such as the customary practice of "floating" foreign language teachers, and expectations of teachers, such as additional responsibilities, influenced teachers' sense of efficacy. Teachers expressed general concern about their ability to perform effectively in the

classroom when burdened by school policies, procedures, and duties.

### School Relations

The relevance of school relationships to teachers' sense of efficacy has been noted in educational research (Bloland & Selby, 1980; Goodlad, 1984; Jackson, 1968; Litt & Turk, 1985; Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Norton, 1984). Teachers interviewed in the present study identified relations with students, parents, colleagues, principals, and other administrators as important factors in their sense of efficacy. Satisfaction and lack of satisfaction derived from these associations were important to feelings of effectiveness. In this section school relations are discussed in terms of student and parent relations, collegial relations, and principal and other administrative relations.

Teachers identified student and parent relations as an important factor in the context of teaching that affected their feelings of effectiveness. They enjoyed the role of counselor and felt that the rewards of teaching were directly related to positive relations with students. Three of the teachers had advanced degrees in counselor education and attributed their sense of satisfaction to their training as counselors more so than their training as foreign language teachers. This finding was corroborated by other teachers who had had training in counseling but

did not have advanced degrees. When asked about the rewards of teaching after citing negative contextual factors as hindrances to sense of effectiveness, one teacher said, "Kids. I love these kids. Oh, they give me a hard time but when I see them grow--and not just academically--that's rewarding." Generally positive student relations, which all teachers reported, appeared to balance some negative factors. As one teacher said,

When I've been told in the front office that I have to make an appointment to use the Xerox machine I'm furious and I storm out of there. But by the time I get to my class--my class that's way too big and that meets in this awful room--I close the door and I feel like a different person.

Other teachers responded similarly:

In spite of the fact that the state doesn't appreciate me and the county doesn't appreciate me, kids do as a whole.

Students help me stay enthusiastic because they appreciate what I do and they know how bad the conditions are. They're frustrated too. It's almost like we have a pact between us. They do the book work and I'll try to pull off some vibrant activity. It makes me mad. Students don't know that school can do more for them but they sure know something's wrong. Teachers know what's wrong but we're powerless to do anything about it.

Teachers also identified the importance of collegial relations to their sense of efficacy. Teachers in this district foreign language program generally reported high

collegiality, rapport, and mutual respect as a group. As they reported about each other during interviews, many of them had taught in the district 10 years or longer and had established reputations for high and fair professional standards. Several teachers had served as interns under teachers who were now their colleagues. In one school there was a "three generation hierarchy" as one teacher described it. This, she said, served as a mutual support system. Although several instances were identified as having negative effects, the majority of the teachers in this study reported positive collegial relations which they believed contributed to their feelings of effectiveness. Teachers new to the program reported that teachers in other subject areas as well as foreign language were generally helpful and supportive. Teachers' comments illustrate their feelings of collegial rapport:

The foreign language teachers here are cooperative and supportive of each other. We meet at lunch sometimes, either bring our lunches or sometimes we have covered dish. Everybody brings something and we meet then and discuss whatever needs we have or whatever needs to be discussed or shared or whatever.

Going to other teachers in the county has been very successful. Virtually everything I've done has been on my own initiative or someone else has called me. And it's this kind of network that we have that has been the most helpful thing. I have good friends at other schools who are French teachers and they introduced me to their friends who are the Spanish teachers and then we worked together. We share materials and sometimes we

share ideas. We meet each other at conferences and things like that.

When asked to discuss why this collegial support existed in a program that extends to six high schools that are geographically widely spaced, teachers cited several reasons.

For one thing I just think foreign language teachers are a social group. We like to get together socially, some of us, and we don't always talk about work but we have things in common. We're also what I call "show-off" people. We like to show our colleagues what we've done. Some of us even go to the [state foreign language association meeting] together and that's a lot of fun.

Another teacher said, "When I have needed some help I have called other Spanish teachers and have said, 'I understand you've done this before,' and every single time I've had a positive response." One teacher described the group as "generally cooperative" and said another teacher had helped her deal with the problem of not having her own room. "She advised me to ask the principal and make a case for why I needed my own room. It worked."

In a supportive collegial atmosphere teachers reported that often their sense of effectiveness was bolstered as a result of talking with other teachers and comparing teaching situations, teaching strategies, and coping mechanisms. This finding supports results of a previous study (Ashton, Buhr, & Crocker, 1984) that teachers

perceive their effectiveness in terms of a norm-referenced construct.

Another reason for an unusual degree of rapport among district Spanish teachers was attributed by some teachers to the efforts of a university professor:

Well, a lot of foreign language teachers in this county have taken courses from [the professor]. [The professor] knows us and where we teach and we can call when we need something. Right now I'm doing an independent study course on immersion for foreign language. [The professor] helps me find materials.

Principal relations and relations with other administrators such as deans, guidance counselors, and the supervisor of the foreign language program were also cited as factors in teachers' sense of efficacy. The role of the principal in influencing teachers' sense of effectiveness has been documented (Bloland & Selby, 1980; Good & Brophy, 1984; Goodlad, 1984; Litt & Turk, 1985; Nicholson & Tracy, 1982). Nicholson and Tracy (1982) reported, for example, that principals' clarity of role and knowledge regarding curricular change were significantly related to teacher attitude. Findings of the present study confirmed this evidence. Findings also supported results reported by Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) that the role conceptions of teachers were directly related to principals' conceptions of teachers' roles. Teachers who described principals as "supportive of foreign language teachers and teaching" and

"sensitive to our particular needs" reported high feelings of effectiveness, whereas teachers who described principals as "totally disinterested in foreign language in this school" and "saying we're prima donnas" reported feelings of frustration.

In a conversation with one area principal, the district principals were characterized as part of a "good ol' boy network" that includes some women who have reached the good ol' boy status. Teachers' comments regarding principal and other administrative relations were ample and explicit. Data analysis revealed principal and administrative relations to be a significant area influencing teachers' sense of efficacy. The following excerpts characterize teachers' views:

The principal here knows that Spanish is a subject that is not going well in this school but he never visits the classes. We asked him to speak to the students to tell them how important it is to study and so forth. He came but he just told them they have a right to fail if they do not choose to study. I wanted him to say, "O.K., I'm coming around every week and I want to see this class improve." But all he said was, "You teachers must think of something to motivate your students." I think the function of principals and deans should be much more positive and reinforcing. The principal here makes it so obvious that he is so busy with his business that I would not dare to suggest that he visit my classes and offer an attitude that the students need to see.

A lot of teachers are leaving the profession or they're somehow trying to find a system, a niche that works for them. If [the principal] continues to allow me to work part-time at the

capacity I'm working at now, I'd probably continue with it for many, many years. It's working for me. I know I wouldn't do it if I didn't have some of the built-in positive things. I wouldn't do it.

We had a cultural experience in my fourth and fifth year classes this past Friday. One class had ordered food from Fulano's and it had to be picked up first period. Well, that's a planning period. One group had ordered food from Ese Tipo's and it had to be picked up fourth period. That was also a planning period of mine. I went to the principal and asked and he said "Go, by all means." There was no problem. And the nice thing is when you ask him he has never said no. He just wants to be asked. He's the same way with personal needs. If you need to be gone even during a time when you teach, if you can work it out within the department so those kids are not left alone, go. We've never had that before here and it really makes a difference. And that's bending the rule but is that not saving the county some money? Because they're going to have to pay a substitute. If I have to be gone for an hour to go to the doctor, who benefits by my taking a day of sick leave, which is what I would have had to do under the system? No one benefits, the kids don't benefit and the county has to pay a substitute. But if I can work it out that one of my qualified colleagues who is doing the same thing I'm doing can come in here and work with the kids and I'll pay her back some other time, everybody wins. And I don't think bending the rules in any way is jeopardizing the program whatsoever. I think it's helping. So I appreciate his [the principal's] bending the rules. I think the other reason maybe sometimes they're bent is that he knows how much extra time goes into what we do. I think he's probably like that with everybody unless he knows you're not doing your job. He's extremely, extremely supportive of foreign language in that way.

The above-noted comments from teachers about principals and other administrators involved specific incidents. Teachers also described their "bosses" in more general terms:



Our principal has been more than accommodating to our faculty. He has very few meetings, he does mostly everything by memo. And he does make an effort to talk to you personally and I like that. He has very good rapport with the teachers. And he's easy to get a hold of and talk to, he's not remote. And I like that. It helps me be more effective in my classes when I know I have that kind of support.

I have very cooperative bosses. The principal and both the assistant principals of curriculum are both very supportive of foreign languages and supportive of me as a teacher. I have a friend who teaches in a school where his principal is not supportive of foreign language programs and so everything he gets he's got to claw and fight for. And I don't have that and I'm really grateful. I think one of the things that contributes to their philosophy of being pro foreign languages here is that this school has done well in state competitions and has acquired a name for itself as being good in that area. So any administrator worth his salt is going to want to support these programs that make him look good. It's politics. That's part of it.

I didn't find a lot of support with a child abuse case as far as getting advice and so forth from the principal. That had an effect on me. I also had a problem with my qualifications and I had a battle about that and the principal did not support me in that. I was very surprised. The principal just assumed the role of the administrator, but I'm glad it all came out in my favor.

I think they've been very fair about our obligations as far as meetings and they haven't been excessively demanding. For example at night for Open House we get comp time for that. That's fair, really fair. Teachers who work grad night if they are there all evening, they get comp time on a teacher workday. I think that's extremely fair.

It's his ability to see that this rigid contract is inhumane. And that in other professions you don't have people treated like that. He realizes that we are human beings and that we also have families. If I want to attend a concert of my daughter's, ask him, go. He encourages you to do those things because he thinks it's important for you to participate in those kinds of personal activities. It makes you a happier person and he's right. It makes you feel like, "Yeah, I'll do a little extra." Tuesday night I'm coming to class night for the first time in five or six years to give an award and it isn't just because I like the kid. I also feel like, "Yeah, I can do that" because of the support he gives me.

When I really get all depressed, I call up [the district supervisor] crying, "I can't take anymore of this. I just can't do it anymore." She'll tell me how wonderful I am. That's just what I need to hear. And that helps, because I'm not a native speaker of Spanish and last year was the first time I ever taught Spanish, but I'm an effective teacher. But I also make errors. And when one of the teachers who is a native speaker came up to me, it hurt my feelings. So the supervisor helped. The only thing I would like to see is a little more inservice training, new teaching techniques. It would be real nice to have a consultant, although sometimes those sessions are real boring and the consultants have never been in the classroom and don't know what they're talking about.

The supervisor has been extremely hard working and definitely came in and was probably overwhelmed by what she stepped into. She has shown remarkable stamina and good naturedness and willingness to work and has been a positive addition and that's after having been here for two years now.

The supervisor is nice and friendly but I haven't gotten a lot of help. I wanted a map of Spain but I ended up not getting one. They gave a couple of workshops this year and they're helpful but there are greater needs and bigger problems than workshops and earning points can solve.

Teachers reported that help from guidance counselors provided support that contributed to their feelings of effectiveness:

Earlier this year one of the guidance counselors put a note in my box, stapled up and confidential, that said, "This is confidential, but there's a girl in your second period class whose mother just died right before school started, so I thought you should be aware of that." That helps a lot cause if a kid starts crying for no apparent reason in the middle of class, you can just excuse them and go on with class and not have to stop the class and grill them on what happened.

Factors involving school relations are important to teachers' feelings of effectiveness. Ashton and Webb (in press) suggest, for instance, that principal recognition and support of teachers are related to teachers' sense of efficacy. This was confirmed by teachers in the present study.

#### Decision-Making Structures

Goodlad (1984) reported that the decision-making climate in school was highly related to teachers' satisfaction, a factor also reported by teachers in the present study. Teachers expressed the desire for more participation in decision-making in several areas: class assignments, student placement, curriculum matters, and other problem-solving such as scheduling. Evidence of this desire was apparent in their lengthy discussion of recommendations. Veteran teachers drew on training and

experience for recommendations while newer teachers proposed recommendations based on their ideas, training, and what some described as "common sense." Frustration and anger built when recommendations were discounted by principals and when teachers' suggestions for solutions were thwarted. One teacher expressed this frustration: "We went to him with an alternate plan after he called us on the carpet for so many [student] failures. He just said, 'No, I make the decisions here'." Another teacher pointed out:

Teachers' ideas to solve problems have no forum. There were only two teachers' meetings all year long, one to honor a teacher, one about a student. Teachers aren't in on making decisions.

When asked about her opportunity to make decisions that would make her feel more effective, one teacher sarcastically responded,

Yes, I make decisions. I'm making a decision right now about leaving this job. I love teaching, I love these students, but I have too much pride to work under these conditions and I'm helpless to make the changes I know are needed for students to have the chance to speak the language the way they should. I'll go somewhere else.

Where teachers did have more autonomy, especially in curriculum matters, they reported greater satisfaction:

I really enjoy teaching. I find it stimulating especially if I have some control over the

curriculum. And we do here. Nobody has ever said "Boo" about what we did. We've always been given a great deal of freedom as far as that's concerned. So when I teach my Spanish IV and Spanish V I can pick anything I want for them to read. Nobody ever asks me, "Well, what are you teaching them?" I guess they leave it up to me professionally.

In the foreign language department here things are very good because everybody is pretty much doing what they want to do.

Lacking the power to contribute to decisions about which classes they would teach was also a factor that affected teachers' sense of efficacy.

At the beginning of the semester I had five classes of Spanish I and I was totally happy with one preparation. When the semesters changed, with no previous warning, no question "Would you like to . . . ?" my schedule was just changed and I was given three classes of students who had failed Spanish I first semester. I was extremely upset because I had been given no choice in the matter.

Teachers whose requests for certain assignments were filled reported a higher degree of sense of effectiveness even when they did not condone the way the "system" operated. According to one teacher,

Frankly, between you and me, there is a paternalism system going on here. And if you have a better "in" or if you're liked better than someone else then you get the courses that you want to teach. If someone is not liked quite as well as you are by the administration, they teach the courses that other people don't want to teach. It doesn't frustrate me though because I'm one of the people that they like. I get to teach what I want.

Being assigned classes out of field and "leftover" classes, acknowledged by some as a school norm for foreign language teachers and discussed in a previous section, was frustrating for teachers. One teacher tearfully admitted:

I was assigned three classes of another language. I'm not certified in that language. They think because of my nationality I'm supposed to know it which I do, but I never studied it at a higher level. I don't know the literature. You apply for one job and they put you in another one. You see they put me where they have nobody and it is not my area. Yet I'm responsible for those students' learning. It's very frustrating and I'm very angry about that.

Many teachers felt that certain students should not be in their classes, but they were not consulted as to student placement. Teachers were told that with the addition of a seventh period to the school class schedule "students just needed a place to be so they put them in Spanish--EMRs, ESEs, LDs, you name it. It wasn't fair to those students and it wasn't fair to me. I resented not being able to do anything about it." Another teacher expressed a similar sentiment:

The frustrating thing for me about teaching here is that teachers have absolutely no input in who comes into your class. If you feel that a person should not take a particular language, there's nothing you can do about it. I've never felt so bad about being a teacher as here. I used to love teaching so much, but now I hate it. I hope to get out of it as soon as I can. One of my students even said that I must be crazy to choose to be a teacher. That's the way I feel.

Discussion of Findings Regarding Mesosystem Factors  
and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

Mesosystem factors played a pivotal and influential role not only regarding teachers' sense of efficacy, but also regarding their appraisal strategies. Efficacy was affected negatively particularly with reference to additional responsibilities and principal relations. The major cultural theme that distinguished high efficacy feelings from low efficacy feelings was the presence of supportive or unsupportive principal relations. Teachers who identified the negative influence of too many additional responsibilities and extra duties that took away from teaching time, and poor principal and administrative relations expressed uncertainty, insecurity, and vulnerability in a bureaucratized system:

There is so much bureaucracy, it's almost like the Nazi situation--I was only following orders. Because to whom do you complain? Not even complain, that's too strong a word. With whom do you talk? And if you do talk with a superior what can the superior do? We sometimes look to the person next in line above us in the structure and that person is only in a sandwich. And the person above is in a sandwich and so on. It leaves one feeling very vulnerable.

For example teachers discussed several strategies for coping with additional responsibilities. First, they comply with administrative edicts because they fear reprisal: "I would say 'No' more often if I had a more secure position"

or because they feel ". . . this can't last forever." Second, they refuse if they do feel secure in their position or if they know they can delegate jobs to other teachers. Third, they acquiesce. Two teachers recited the "serenity prayer--accept the things that I can't change, change the things I can, and be wise enough to know what the difference is and not spin my wheels."

Other comments offer more explicit details about coping strategies used in particular circumstances:

I finally have said "no" to some of these extracurricular things. I've said that loud and clear. I haven't said it to the principal yet except that I did write a letter in December and resigned at that time as sponsor of the Spanish Club, but I continued through the rest of the year doing things with those kids.

I got into trouble this year for not doing the paperwork. I adopted a survivalist mode. I cut out what I decided was unnecessary and kept in what I thought was necessary for the class and the students and faced the music later. I put up a shield around myself. I decided to do something in my classes and put off the bureaucratic red tape and entanglements and just get into trouble later on.

They asked me to be in charge of the Conferencia. A lot of the things I'm given without any question as to whether I want to do them or not. No one asks me, they just say, "Here, you do this." I was asked to give a detailed report of my total immersion weekend, how I selected the students, who went, what we did, who the guests were, what we ate, how many hours we spent. Well, I just said "No."



Several coping strategies took the form of taking matters into their own hands by "bending the rules." This was evident where teachers felt little principal support. An example of this is illustrated in the following excerpt:

Cooking in the classroom is an example of what we call a cultural experience. We're not supposed to eat here and everybody says, "How come you get away with cooking?" I said, "Until somebody tells me I can't do it or they provide me with a place where I can and I think it's an essential part, then I'm going to continue to do it." I used to plan on days when the principal wasn't going to be here, I knew he was going out of town. Sometimes we'd cook in the hall because the rule was you couldn't cook in classrooms.

One veteran teacher expressed the concern that many teachers had as they appraised their situations and explored other career possibilities as a coping strategy:

A friend of ours who has a doctorate in education is now a manager of one of the MacDonald's and I jokingly said to my husband that in one of those moments like I had last week when I was just feeling like I was going to drown in all this stuff, "Maybe I could get a job doing that." He said, "Sure, and make a whole lot of money, too."

Discussion of mesosystem factors led to expressions of vulnerability, insecurity, and uncertainty about teachers' future performance. Webb (1981) describes this uncertainty as a form of alienation that contributes to feelings of powerlessness, meaningless, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. In the present study, it appeared that support from principals and other administrators provided a

direct link between microsystem contextual factors that teachers described as "overwhelming" and teachers' describing the forms of alienation described by Webb (1981). This has important implications for teachers' sense of efficacy.

In this section school relations and customary procedures in schools were described as factors important to teachers' sense of efficacy. "Floating," "leftover" class assignments, and additional responsibilities and duties were cited as factors in school norms. School relations factors were identified as student and parent relations, collegial relations, and principal and other administrative relations. Factors related to decision-making structures in schools were teacher class assignments, student placement, curriculum matters, and general problem-solving. The following section discusses factors at the level of the exosystem.

#### Exosystem Factors

Structures and locations of general decision-making power and resource allocation influence immediate settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the present study, the political and socioeconomic climate in the school district, state, and nation had an impact on teachers' sense of efficacy and professionalism. This has been discussed in general terms in the background for this study. However, teachers identified and described specific factors

regarding school district and state personnel, policies, procedures, mandates, and proposed mandates. Examples of these are the issues of merit pay and teacher evaluation and the perceived effect on teacher morale of the policies of a new superintendent of schools. Also cited were factors related to the nature of education in the United States. At this point in the description of the factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy, it is important to note that teachers identified the majority of influential contextual factors in their immediate settings (the microsystem) and in relationships among settings (the mesosystem). However, factors in the broader context of teaching in the district, state, and nation (the exosystem and macrosystem) were also identified. The factors that teachers identified as influential are discussed in the following sections in terms of (a) the nature of the school district and state and (b) the nature of education in the United States.

#### The Nature of the School District and State

As discussed in chapter I, the school district in which the present study was conducted was undergoing changes partly as a result of the national and state call for reform in education. Teachers reported that rezoning efforts and the busing issue had created controversy and dissent in the community. Teachers who participated in the present study perceived that changes in the school district

had contributed to their sense of efficacy. They identified contextual factors in terms of changes in key administrative personnel, changes in curriculum, and changes in their professional status. Many of these changes led to feelings of ineffectiveness, job insecurity, discouragement, powerlessness, frustration and ultimately to career changes for many of the teachers.

Factors associated with changes in key administrative personnel were cited. A new district superintendent of schools had been hired, new members had been elected to the school board, and a new supervisor of foreign language education had been hired. In general, teachers interviewed were wary of the policies and initiatives of the new superintendent. These statements characterized the feelings of the participants in this study:

I think the superintendent is not to be trusted. He's got a lot of good ideas, but I don't think he can be depended upon to do anything toward teacher morale. He's not interested in that at all.

I think it's really a mistake that we have this philosophy coming from our superintendent that every child has the right to fail. I like that philosophically but sometimes you find this schism between the philosophical point of view and the front trenches. I don't like being put in this position.

Probably the biggest thing that would make me want to leave teaching is if I got shifted to some other part of town to teach. It's always back there because it's something the superintendent did in his last position. Just

aplecarted everything. Administrators, teachers. . . . It makes you very suspicious of everything.

Also included in administrative personnel changes was the reassignment of three of the six area high school principals. As discussed in a previous section although teachers in the present study cited principal relations as a factor that influenced their sense of efficacy, no connection appeared between efficacy and the length of time the principal had been at the school. Most teachers who reported good principal relations also reported high sense of effectiveness in that area regardless of how long the principal had been at the school. In general, however, teachers expressed uncertainty about job security growing out of general personnel changes in the context of the workplace and school district.

Factors were also identified regarding curricular changes particularly in the district foreign language program. Increased emphasis on implementing curriculum frameworks and performance standards was welcomed by teachers in this study. As previously discussed, class size, however, was described as an obstacle in implementing changes in the curriculum. The traditional teaching of Spanish was influenced by an increased emphasis on oral and aural proficiency. Teachers again noted that class size and other factors often hindered their effectiveness. Attempts to present their point of view to administrators

were countered by arguments for budgetary constraint and the need to be equitable to teachers in other subject areas. In addition, teachers supplied many of their own materials and supplies and cited availability of resource materials as another factor they considered important to their sense of efficacy.

The area in the county that's really weak is audio-visual materials. They're just extremely poor and I've done a lot of reviewing of films this year. I hope they're going to buy some things. It's discouraging to know that they only want to buy things that can be used in multi-subject areas, in other words, a film that would be useful in history, humanities, middle school, high school, elementary, and that's real discouraging because I don't think you get quality then. A lot of the audio-visual stuff that I use in my Spanish IV, I tape myself or we rent a movie or the Spanish Club buys. That's the one area that I think we're real weak in.

Teachers also identified several factors regarding their perceived status as a result of changes, policies, and procedures in the district. The issues of merit pay, teacher evaluation, teacher competency, salaries, and job security contributed to feelings of powerlessness and insecurity.

Some teachers focused comments heavily on issues that were of concern at the time of the interview. For instance, teacher evaluation for merit pay was conducted during the time of data collection for the study. Uncertainty about results and use of results pervaded the population of high school Spanish teachers and this concern

surfaced as a major and timely contextual factor. For instance many teachers who participated in this study had received a "lay-off letter" that implied that their jobs were not assured for the coming year not only in the school but also in the district. One teacher's comment expresses the sentiments shared by many teachers:

The administration is so, what's the word I am looking for . . . vague, about what they're going to do with us. They have given, except for me, they have given all the other foreign language teachers in the school a layoff letter saying that you are not going to be hired back next year. But then the teachers who got the layoff letter were told that this was just a formality, we expect to hire you back. We all think that they've done that so that nobody will push and say, "If you don't give me three classes . . ." You know, so it raises the administration's bargaining power. But I didn't get a letter and I'm not on continuing contract. Some of the other people who have been in the county longer than I have got a letter. And they're good teachers. It's not like I'm a better teacher than they are or anything like that. Everybody came screaming, "I got a layoff letter, I got a layoff letter." And I said, "I didn't."

The following comment from an established veteran teacher in the district also emphasizes the insecurity teachers had:

I do have a sense that I don't have control over my destiny. The thing that probably concerns me more than even that is the fact that occasionally rumors float around about how they're going to shift all the teachers in the county. If I have to go elsewhere, I'll go elsewhere for another job that pays more. That's a pretty strong statement but that's the way I feel at this point about it. Probably the biggest thing that would

make me want to leave teaching is if I got shifted to some other part of town to teach.

The most important factors cited, however, concerned the issues of salary, merit pay, and teacher evaluation. Many teachers in the study were angry about low salaries and poor handling of merit pay evaluations. They noted in particular that classroom evaluations were often made by people who did not know Spanish or whom they felt were otherwise not qualified to evaluate foreign language teachers' performance. Evaluators were often not aware that more than one level of Spanish was being taught in a single class. Teachers resented the difficulty of the content area examination and commented extensively on these issues:

I think that probably the biggest problem for the foreign language teachers in this county has been that master teaching program. Very few of the Spanish teachers did well on that exam. I think we know of three of all who took it from this county who passed, and only one scored above the 85 percentile. That was a very demoralizing thing to a lot of teachers.

I did not let it affect me in the classroom because I was one of the people, even though I took the test and kind of played their little Mickey Mouse game, I was one of the people who felt that no one would ever see a penny of that money. I felt the program was a farce, I thought it was poorly conceived and definitely was based upon data that was not pertinent to the high school. I was one of the people who passed the observation instrument with a very high score, and I did nothing different than I normally do in the classroom. I refused to attend any of the workshops that they scheduled, I talked to no one about how the classroom should run. I would not teach my class in English, and one of the



observers did not understand the language, because I don't teach that way normally. So they wouldn't know whether you were doing it effectively or not. That's how outraged I was at the whole thing. I know one person in our department who taught her whole class in English because the observer did not know or understand any Spanish.

I didn't pass the grammar part. When I left there I knew I hadn't passed it and it angered me that I had given up a day of time to spend with my mother and family during my spring vacation to be subjected to such a demoralizing experience. Because I don't think I'm stupid and I certainly don't think I'm ignorant in the language that I teach. But anyway, it didn't filter down into the classroom. I was, I can be honest with you, I was ashamed to tell anyone that I had not passed. Now that did bother me and it wasn't until someone else said, "I didn't pass. How did you do?" that I even dared to tell anybody that I hadn't passed.

There wasn't anything on the test that directly related to what I teach or had ever taught in the 18 years that I've been a teacher. There were some things dealing with the subjunctive but as far as those readings were concerned that we were asked to do, there was so much that was on there that was not part of what I do that I said, "This is not an accurate estimate of what I know about what I do." That's probably the only thing that kept me from feeling really bad about it. I realized that it wasn't an evaluation of the knowledge of what I have, of what I give to my students.

I'm really worried that those results will ever be made available to the county office, the administration, or have any other direct relationship to my evaluation here in the classroom. I do worry about how it might be used surreptitiously sometime down the road and that bothers me. The only thing that I would ever be able to point to are the number of students that have gone to state [competition] that I have been directly involved with and the number of times we've come back winners in the state. If my job depended on my scores on the merit pay exam I would never be rehired . . . ever. I didn't even come close to passing.

I think the merit teacher thing is ridiculous. They have so many restrictions on it, and it is so political. I'm sure you read the paper yesterday. It's obvious looking at the percentage numbers that some counties knew. This was supposed to be a blind evaluation. The administrator wasn't supposed to know which things were going to be given the higher points. Well, you look in the paper and look at the high percentage in one county and the low percentage in this county. You wonder if the administrators had dinner with the people who made up the evaluation form. Also the thing with the master's degree. I understand that they want to have the best educated teachers, but I don't have a master's but I just think I'm one of the best teachers, foreign language teachers, around.

Teachers' views confirmed the findings of a recent study (Epstein, 1985) that parents and principals emphasize different aspects of teaching. Principals value extra work, for instance, that establishes teacher leadership. On the other hand, parents value personal connections and the quality of classroom life that their children experience. Epstein (1985) supported Bronfenbrenner's (1979) view of the importance of these connections and shared responsibilities between social institutions. Financial incentive plans such as merit pay, however, rely on factors such as principal ratings, teachers' education, and years of experience, which may or may not be indicative of teacher effectiveness as perceived by teachers, parents, and students. Teachers in the present study described the stress of being "caught in the middle," as one teacher described it.

Discussion of issues that had an effect on these teachers' sense of efficacy led to teachers' perceptions of their professional status:

What I need as a teacher that I'm not getting is from the county, state and community level. I'm not getting respect. It's the henhouse theory. The rooster and the chickens on top get to crap on all the ones underneath them. The ones on the bottom rung get the most crap. Teachers are not very well respected and everybody in the community feels they can come and tell you how to teach and what you should be doing with little Johnny. The county doesn't respect me because they treat me like a number. And the state doesn't respect me because they don't appropriate enough money for my salary. I'm worth a lot more than I'm getting because I'm a good teacher.

I don't like it when the principal feels his hands are tied and I need to leave campus an hour early in the afternoon to meet an appointment and I have somebody to cover my class. I don't like it if the principal feels like his hands are tied and the county office has to dock me that hour out of my sick leave. A lot of times, and this needs to be confidential, a lot of times the principal turns his head and says, "O.K., it's all right, no problem." But technically he's supposed to dock me an hour of sick time. See, that makes me feel like a number, not like a professional.

Teachers have no voice, no structure for input into the system, no chances for decision-making. Decrees are delivered from on high. Teachers should be recognized as having valuable ideas and insight but it seems like a one-way street, decreed by the state, like joining the army--sign a contract and take orders. The humanity of the process is obliterated by the bureaucratization. Walls are being built up between administrators and teachers and something is being lost. It's getting worse. Teachers are the front line. Now this top heavy system is building momentum, it's self-perpetuating. The answer to every problem is to develop more procedures and guidelines.

I teach in spite of the county and the state who think I'm a number. I teach because I enjoy teaching and because I think I do some good, because on a one-to-one with kids, I think I do some good.

There's got to be more respect for the person's occupation even if you don't like the person. And I don't think we're getting that, not just foreign language teachers but all teachers. It's discouraging. Frankly, and this is strictly confidential, I'm quitting as soon as my husband gets his degree, I'm quitting.

Teachers felt little support from the teachers' union and expressed particular concern about not being able to "get rid of the duds because the union protects them":

The union doesn't really care about the quality of teaching. They want their fees and they don't really care whether you're a good teacher or not. They want to know that they've got a check coming from you for \$200 and some odd dollars a year and they want to protect your job. In exchange for that, they'll protect your job. And that's fine if you're good, but if you're a lousy teacher, they shouldn't be protecting your job. They should be working with administration to get you the hell out of teaching because those people give me a bad name. We've got some very excellent teachers, but we have some duds. Every school's got them I guess. And you can't get rid of them because the union protects them. Here they are, with their feet up on the desk, the assignment on the board, and the kids bored to death, not learning a damn thing. I guess you can tell that's a sore spot with me. Thank God, I don't think we have any deadwood in the foreign language department. We have some awfully hardworking, dedicated, good teachers.

I'm personally not pro-union because I feel like the union is also supporting teachers who aren't working as hard as I am.

Our union is nothing as far as I'm concerned. I had a situation with the principal who used to be here where I filed a grievance against him because he docked me a day's pay and refused to allow me personal or sick leave one day when I had to leave. I was so emotionally distraught that I couldn't stay and even though I got basic support from the union it came out that I had no case to contest because I had surpassed a legal time limit to file a grievance. Other than a technicality I would have won but the principal had no right to do that and the union didn't help me.

I don't like unions. The confrontational approach isn't always helpful, it's artificial.

I'm personally not pro-union because I'm feeling like the union is also supporting other teachers who aren't doing all these other things. I want support from teachers who are really working. The only way I see our pressure being felt is by refusing to continue in the system.

The nature of the school district with its recent changes in key administrative personnel and changes in curriculum in turn created changes in teachers' professional status, according to the majority of teachers in the present study. Issues such as merit pay and teacher evaluation were not resolved to the satisfaction of many teachers and help from the teachers' union was described as "minimal." The following section describes the influence of the nature of education in this country on teachers' sense of efficacy.

## The Nature of Education in the United States

Many of the factors that teachers identified as influencing their sense of efficacy as teachers in the school district and state were related to the broader national context of education. Teachers cited factors in terms of the American system of education, teacher training, and the effect of mass media coverage of teacher and school effectiveness.

Teachers felt that efforts to reform the education system have succeeded only in "adding more requirements" and "demoralizing" teachers. Attention to problems in American education via the media coupled with extant poor conditions have discouraged teachers:

I don't think many people would deny that people aren't going into teaching because of the money and the hours and when they expect you to put in three hours a night, expect it. It's not like you do it if you want to, it's expected that you will do this because they don't give you any other time to do it. Then they have the gall to pay you \$14,000 a year to be working 10 hours a day and you have to have a college diploma and in this county a master's degree. If you don't have a master's degree you are pretty much looked down on.

. . . the things you constantly see in the paper about teachers as a whole, not just foreign language teachers. It makes you embarrassed to be a teacher. I chose to teach. It's not because I can't do anything else. I obviously can. I could go back to work for Metropolitan Life and make more money and have a job that people would consider more prestigious, and I chose not to. That's a very negative thing to hear the community and parents say, "Well, he's a teacher, he can't do anything else or he doesn't

want to do anything else or he doesn't have the drive to do anything else." When people say, "What do you do?" I want to say, "Well, I speak two languages."

I think the problems that we're experiencing with foreign language is a reflection of what's going on in the education field in general. Kids are not learning to retain in other subjects, and naturally when it comes to a foreign language, it is just exactly the same.

One veteran teacher summarized American education thusly:

So many times in education, specialists view a many faceted sphere, you know, a globe that has many little facets cut on it and they see one of them glistening and they think, "Ah ha, I've found it, I've found the secret." And they develop a whole situation, methodology, curriculum on that one little facet. And they're so dazzled by the glimmer of that facet that they forget all the rest of it. I've seen that happen time and time and time again.

I'll give you a little visual image. The educators are sailing on a ship and this year they all run to that side of the ship and they almost capsize it. Next year, "Oh, look over there," and they all dash to the other side of the ship and almost capsize it.

In addition, teacher training was cited as a factor that influenced teachers' sense of efficacy. Teachers generally felt that their training and experience in learning the Spanish language were good. Many had extensive backgrounds both in academic preparation and experience in a Spanish-speaking country. Though not always complimentary of education courses ("I think somewhere along the line somebody needs to show you how to

run the damn Xerox machine"), they felt that "really there were some good classes and they did make you think, and, yes, it is abstract and in some cases you say, 'Well, you get in a classroom for five minutes and you know that doesn't work'."

In some cases teachers felt that their university training had not prepared them for teaching Spanish at the secondary school level; a fact also confirmed in the literature (Herr, 1982). Teachers generally have reported that teacher training has had little relationship with the reality of the classroom (Guskey, 1984; Lortie, 1975). In addition, with the opening of foreign language classes, particularly Spanish, to all students, some teachers felt that training was needed to teach emotionally handicapped and low ability students effectively. The three teachers who had advanced degrees in counselor education reported that this training was the most important factor in their sense of efficacy relative to student type.

Teachers perceived that factors in the nature of education in the United States today influenced their sense of efficacy. As one teacher pointed out, the movement to reform "carried with it the explicit accusation that something was terribly wrong and if we can get these teachers to shape up, our problems will be solved." In addition, teachers felt that education in this country "goes from one gimmick to the next without ever really



accommodating teachers' real needs." Perceived instability in the American system of education contributed to the sense of effectiveness of teachers in the present study.

#### Discussion of Exosystem Factors and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

Teachers' identifications of exosystem factors led to discussions of why they remain in teaching and in the school district; their recommendations for general improvement; and their feelings of powerlessness, low professional esteem, and insecurity in a perceived unstable educational system. Having cited many negative micro- and mesosystem factors, many teachers, nevertheless, enjoyed their role in the community:

I feel very good about being a teacher when I'm involved in school affairs and community functions, I feel very important. There I'm getting positive feedback, and I feel very proud to be a teacher. You know, a university professor cannot necessarily do this job.

They enjoyed the perceived advantage of being "a rare commodity" and were aware of the shortage of foreign language teachers:

I interviewed in this county, and they were pushing foreign language. They were looking for teachers at the very last minute.

Teaching part-time was encouraged in the district and was a career strategy that helped some teachers overcome

negative contextual factors. This seemed especially true for veteran teachers in the school system.

Other comments offer insight into teachers' thinking about broader implications for teaching:

Just let me be a teacher. The system needs a carrot approach rather than a stick approach. Enticements work better. I have a nebulous feeling that things just aren't right for me to be a teacher and I always wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to make a difference in the world. I had teachers who made a difference in my life. I know I'm an able person. Even under these conditions I haven't given up. There have been days when I didn't try like I could have but I never stopped experimenting or trying to motivate. I'm going to take the time this summer to decide whether teaching . . . if this is what teaching is like . . . is for me. My husband comments on what teaching is doing to me. The cost is too high.

It's like they've got teachers caught in a sense. I think that's the teacher personality. And they play on that, consciously or unconsciously. I mean, we keep on doing it. They're not worrying about us. Kids walk in with Izods and O.P.s and my kids are still wearing K-Mart specials. I guess if it came down to it, it's time to start looking after your own.

Feelings of powerlessness, low professional status, and perceived instability in the district school system were pervasive. One teacher said, "teachers are like farmers, we always find things to complain about," but most teachers were more serious and reflective about their situations. They were discouraged by infringements on classroom autonomy and inability to influence educational or school policies. This discouragement led to low

professional esteem. The fact that so many were able to find rewards in teaching and employ coping strategies suggests a high sense of efficacy. As they reported, however, factors in the context of teaching have influenced feelings of effectiveness. The majority of teachers in the present study appeared to possess many of the characteristics of highly efficacious people: they maintained high standards, intensified efforts at critical performance points, persevered despite failures, attributed failure to insufficient effort rather than deficient ability, and coped with difficult tasks. They also appeared to use these characteristics as they appraised their teaching situations and made decisions aimed at alleviating poor conditions and exasperating problems.

In summary, this section discussed the contextual factors that teachers identified as affecting their sense of efficacy regarding the nature of the school district and state in which the study was conducted and the nature of education in the United States as teachers perceived it. Specific factors cited were discussed in terms of changes in key administrative personnel, curriculum, and teacher status. Teachers also identified factors relating to the American system of education and teacher training as portrayed particularly by the mass media. The following section discusses contextual factors at a final level, the macrosystem.

### Macrosystem Factors

A society's basic cultural beliefs set in motion and sustain patterns of human behavior and motivation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Many of these beliefs have important implications for teachers' sense of efficacy. In addition, changes in beliefs and cultural traditions produce changes in teachers and learners. In the present study, teachers identified factors in terms of beliefs and cultural changes in American society relative to (a) the role of foreign language in American education and (b) the nature of the learner in foreign language classrooms.

### The Role of Foreign Language in American Education

The participants in this study identified two major factors as American cultural beliefs that influenced their sense of efficacy as high school Spanish teachers-- America's tradition of monolingualism and popular attitudes toward non-Anglo culture, language, and race. Monolingualism, specifically relative to Standard American English (SAE), has dominated American culture. Attitudes toward other languages and cultures have reflected that singular perspective.

Historically, America's continental position between two vast oceans has encouraged monolingualism and isolation. This has been referred to as a "moat mentality" (President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, 1979, p. 5). The melting pot cliché

and the notion of the model American, who was part of a homogeneous culture by virtue of speaking English and espousing white, Anglo-Saxon values regardless of native origin or first language, clashed with the social reality of the existence and flourishing of many languages and cultures within America's borders (Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974). Yet America persisted in the view that Standard American English was the appropriate language for American schooling and also that the study of foreign language was an academic frill unnecessary and unimportant for all but the college-bound (T. Cooper, 1985).

Teachers interviewed in the present study, many of whom were themselves not native Americans, were keenly aware of the cultural influence of monolingualism in America. While changes in recent years have brought about awareness of the economic and humanistic need to know other languages and cultures, teachers in the present study expressed concern about problems in everyday interactions with students, colleagues, and administrators regarding the role of foreign language in education. For example, when teachers at one school offered a recommendation regarding student placement to curb the student failure rate, they were reminded that foreign language was not considered a "core curriculum" subject and as such did not receive the same priority as basic subjects such as mathematics or

English. It is important to note that this is the same school at which teacher-principal relations were strained; therefore, this may have indicated a teacher-principal relations problem rather than a Spanish-as-core-curriculum-subject problem. However, teachers who participated in the study did acknowledge the fact that foreign language was still seen by many as an extra subject that received little accommodation in an all-English curriculum. Informal interviews with teachers of other subjects in the district and with an area principal confirmed this fact.

Spanish teachers acknowledged that they were accustomed to dealing with the broader implications of monolingualism in their professional lives. They did, however, express frustration and discouragement when confronted with the more direct influences of Americans' attitudes and prejudices toward non-Anglo cultures, languages, and races. Teachers' own comments best illustrate this point:

Some students don't want to learn Spanish because they say they don't want to learn a "Spic" language and they won't even be associated with Spanish for that reason. There is this attitude, this running attitude, that I've never come across before and I don't like that.

I'm appalled at the racism in this community. It was so bad one time that a parent refused to drive the luggage of one of my students over to their house even though they lived close by. There was a whole ordeal about it and I tried to feel around the situation to avoid a confrontation, to find another alternative. Within the classroom I try to attack it head on. Terms like "nigger" and

"spics" are common vocabulary and it's used very innocently. The kids say, "Well, they refer to themselves this way so why can't I?" And I indicate that this is not appropriate, it is considered rude. The way it affects foreign language is students' attitudes. It's really sad, Spanish has such a rich culture. The attitudes here are very close-minded.

Kids ask, "Why do they have so many children? Have they never heard of the pill?" when we talk about Mexico and culture and how people spend their days. And when we talk about these cultural differences they come up with these kinds of remarks. They have so strong a feeling that this is the only way things should be and that others are inferior. And no matter what you try it doesn't matter. It's very discouraging to a teacher.

There is a difference between teaching Spanish here and teaching other languages because of the general conception that Americans have about Spanish. They think Spanish is easy for some reason. And in this country anything Spanish is considered second rate.

They don't like to see things done in a different way. Their constant comment is, "It's weird, it's weird." And you try to tell them it's not weird, it's different, but it doesn't sink in. Also naturally you've got this shyness and being afraid of your peers laughing about you and as a result the oral drills were not very popular and I really had a hard time trying to get them to talk.

Teachers confirmed research findings that indicated that implementing cultural pluralism has basic philosophical and moral questions (Grittner, 1971) and noted that a significant aspect of their work involved attempts to explain to their students the importance of cultural differences. Where these attempts have clashed

with American traditions concerning monolingualism, there have been problems. Teachers' comments have supported Grittner's description of the "powerful force of tradition that mandates conformity to 'mainstream' Anglo-American values, mannerisms, and speech patterns" (1971, p. 51). Teachers' sense of efficacy was influenced, then, by American traditions of English language monolingualism and often prejudicial attitudes about the Spanish language and culture.

#### The Nature of the Learner in Foreign Language Classrooms

Teachers identified the effects of changes in American society on the nature of the learner as a factor that influenced their sense of efficacy. They cited changes in life styles, family organizations, and social mores as causes for changes in learners which has also been documented by recent reports (Elkind, 1981, 1984). Teachers also discussed the foreign language student as a learner. Changes in learner social behavior, they noted, required new strategies, not only instructional strategies but also classroom management strategies. They reported the need for problem-solving strategies to deal with victims of child abuse and substance abuse. The majority of foreign language teachers felt ill-equipped to manage abuse situations, yet valued their own role as counselor to students who needed help. The following excerpts illustrate:



There was one student, a girl, two weeks ago, she had always turned in her homework all the way through. Then one day she didn't turn in her vocabulary sentences and her quiz grades went down two letter grades and so I put on her progress report that I'd like a parent conference, and I do that all the time but sometimes parents don't call. Her mom called and said she was wondering why I had checked that and I said, "Well, maybe this is nothing but your daughter has been sort of detached in class. She sits there not really giving me any attention at all. It wasn't like she was upset at anything in the classroom, it was just that she was thinking about something intensely and was really apart from the class." And I said, "You know, I looked at her grades and they've dropped down a little bit and she hasn't turned in her homework and I was wondering if there was something that you knew about that . . . , if something had happened recently." And she said, "Well, two weeks ago she found out that her father has terminal cancer." So she came in and we talked. There's just so much outside of the classroom that happens that if we're not sensitive to you could totally blow it. If I'd made a big scene or called her on that in front of the class, it could have been real touchy at that point. That's hard.

I just maybe am more sensitive to students' problems than I was a few years ago. And divorce is so hard for most of them to take and that is probably the hardest thing that they have to deal with in their teenage years. No matter how bad life at home was, when that unit finally splits apart, it is devastating. I had one young man become an alcoholic, and it seems to be worse for the boys. The girls cry and they're really miserable and all of that, but they don't typically turn to alcohol or drugs or things of that nature. But the guys just really get messed up. Their outlets are drinking, skipping school and running away.

I have victims of child abuse in my classes. And I've had hassles with HRS and with getting the parents reported. Some students have emotional problems and home problems. That's definitely a factor involved in my teaching. The home

factor. A lot of these kids do not have good home lives. I've had students who left school because they were pregnant or had problems with drugs. Right now I have three students in one class that are victims of child abuse . . . that's sad. Even the school endorses corporal punishment, the community endorses it and I do not endorse it. I think it's wrong. And these kids are brought up in that kind of atmosphere, the hand, the whip, the kicking, and even the shaving of heads as a disciplinary action. Not in the school, but at home, of course. It's happened already to two kids in my class. I had one kid who was so depressed from being beaten, wearing sunglasses, that he just sat there, was listless, lethargic, languishing in the room. Then you have kids who lash out, an angry attitude and you just have to deal with it. I really feel for these kids. It's really a sad situation.

Usually unmotivated children are suffering from some personal problems. When you start seeing that they're not participating you look at them and after a couple of days I talk to them and say, "What's going on?" And they'll, they're pretty open and honest and say, "Things are bad at home" and I say, "O.K." and it's like that's all they need; they need somebody to know that life is unbearable and then usually they come back around. They really respond to a little bit of personal attention.

As noted earlier, it may have been expected that teachers would have cited classroom discipline as a factor in the nature of classes, a microsystem factor. However, teachers in this study reported factors such as student disrespect and apathy more frequently than overt misbehavior, an interesting finding in light of the current information about discipline in schools (A. Gallup, 1985a, 1985b; G. Gallup, 1984). This finding may be explained in part by the fact that traditionally students have elected

foreign language, hence, they had some interest in being in the class. During the 1984-85 school year, however, many students were assigned to Spanish class because of the addition of a seventh period to the high school day. These students, some of whom had elected shop or another class, were reluctant to participate in Spanish classes.

Nevertheless, teachers stated that they attempted to motivate and create interest:

At our school we're always working at motivating students because motivation is a problem. I've worked especially hard this year at different fun activities in the classroom to motivate the kids. We did cooking maybe once a month, I brought in plátanos, just any little thing that was different they enjoyed. They seemed to appreciate it.

However, teachers felt that the larger issue of disrespect was often described by administrators in terms of students' rights and teachers were not encouraged to interfere with students' rights: "The principal said students have the right to fail," and

Students don't show as much respect now. When I was in school and a teacher walked in the room to talk to another teacher, everyone shut up. Now it's circus time. You were able to tell a student to leave your room because he was wearing something that was inappropriate. Now you can't tell a kid what to wear. I'm personally offended by the little girl who has her titties hanging out of her blouse. I think I have a right to ask her to leave but I don't.

Most teachers described the foreign language learner in terms of effort levels and language levels rather than ability levels. Some teachers who were assigned the conversational Spanish class or who had low ability students and who were able to modify the curriculum reported feelings of accomplishment:

I had slow, really slow kids and I loved it. It is slow work and I give less homework. I didn't have them write any kind of free writing. It was guided composition or answer questions about things. But I liked it just as much.

Others offered recommendations for teaching low ability students:

If I were an administrator I'd look for a teacher who wanted to teach that kind of class. It takes a lot of energy and creativity. You have to be a very flexible person who doesn't want or need a textbook, who can spend 45 minutes each class conversing, keeping them interested with no writing whatsoever. It takes a lot of work to prepare for that kind of class. You have to have a lot of enthusiasm and be constantly full of ideas. Everything from art work to puppets to plays. And be constantly doing those things, posters and so forth. You would have to have someone who could function well in a less structured kind of situation.

You have to say, "All right, this is conversational Spanish and the expectations, the objectives are not the same as the traditional academic Spanish." Kids are going to learn a certain amount of vocabulary, they're going to be able to understand certain questions and respond correctly. But they're not going to be expected to write correctly. There would be more emphasis on oral comprehension; low motivated students can do better with comprehension. For example, identifying masculine and feminine. They can

understand that pretty well. But then fill in a blank with "María es . . . bonita o bonito." They don't do well on the written part. In a course like that you have to say, "This is an average Spanish class and these are our objectives" and keep them simple and keep them within the reach of those students. And have a lot of fun activities. They like those.

Perhaps we could have rescued some of them if [our recommendation had been implemented]. Perhaps we could have pulled them in there and pushed them on and they would have made a successful effort. Now they've lost a whole year and we've lost a lot of time.

One teacher attributed some characteristics of low-ability students to "anomie," a cultural condition resulting from rootlessness, and described these students as "reflections of just a different culture." Findings of the pilot study (McNeely, 1984) provided evidence that the attitudes of nine high school basic skills teachers differed from those of the participants in the present study. While some basic skills teachers believed that some students are incapable of learning, the majority of teachers in the present study felt that, in general, low achievers could learn, but they represented a culture that historically has not succeeded in traditional monolingual, white Anglo-American educational settings.

With all the other factors in the context of teaching that influenced their sense of efficacy, teachers were asked how they maintain enthusiasm. One teacher offered,

Even if I don't feel like smiling, I will force myself to because kids won't come over to me and say "Hello" when they're depressed or frustrated because of a situation at home. I will go out of my way to smile and mention good things. I just try to get my mind off their problems, to look for more positive things. There's no sense dwelling on all that stuff. After you talk about it with the guidance counselors, with the drug officers, the police, you just don't dwell on it, you just can't, it's frustrating.

In addition, teachers unanimously reported that they loved the subject area. In contrast to teachers in some other subject areas, specifically teachers of basic skills, participants in this study with few exceptions chose to teach Spanish. Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) suggested that teachers' sense of efficacy may be subject-related; that is, the subject that teachers teach may relate to their feelings of effectiveness to perform successfully. For instance, teachers of basic skills often did not choose to teach basic skills and perceived that they were assigned classes because they were new to the school (McNeely, 1984). Teachers of Spanish chose to teach Spanish even though in several cases they had not chosen the levels to which they were assigned. Teachers reported that being able to teach Spanish influenced their feelings of effectiveness.

#### Discussion of Macrosystem Factors and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

Analysis of discussions of macrosystem factors revealed two areas of omission. Student discipline and

student substance abuse have been generally identified as negative factors in current teaching environments (A. Gallup, 1985a, 1985b; G. Gallup, 1984; Rodman, 1985a). Participants in this study reported the existence of these factors and their management of them, but felt that these factors were not severe in their own circumstances of teaching. Rather, teachers' sense of efficacy was related to problems in motivating students, in efforts to improve attitudes about the language and culture, and in emphasizing that the study of foreign language is different from other studies. Teachers' frustration grew out of American attitudes and America's system of education:

They don't realize that the approach to foreign language is totally different from a history class where, yes, you've taken the test and you can forget everything now. You don't have to remember all those dates, all those names, you can forget them. In a foreign language, it's building on blocks and if you don't have that first block down there, forget it, you can't keep up. Then a lot of kids just stop studying because they're so far behind at a certain point that they just completely lose interest.

Learning Spanish or any foreign language is not like learning history or some other subject. If you forget what you learned at the beginning of the year you can't pass in a foreign language and people don't seem to understand that.

Teachers discussed several strategies they were considering to alleviate the frustration, stress, uncertainty, and powerlessness they experienced during the 1984-85 school year. Several considered (a) part-time

rather than full-time employment, (b) changing teaching areas, and (c) changing schools both within and outside of the public school district. Follow-up interviews revealed that approximately half of the participants in this study made a change in one of the three above-mentioned categories. As teachers reported, these changes were directly related to their sense of effectiveness and were seen as coping strategies primarily to counteract negative contextual factors in their teaching situations during the 1984-85 school year. The one teacher who left because of a change in his wife's employment also expressed feelings of low effectiveness due to negative contextual factors.

The majority of teachers in the present study appeared to possess the characteristics of highly efficacious people: they maintained high standards, intensified efforts at critical performance points, persevered despite failures, attributed failure to insufficient effort rather than deficient ability, and coped with difficult tasks. It was also their high sense of efficacy that helped them channel their coping strategies toward solving problems associated with contextual factors. They were considering ways to alter their job situations rather than personal teaching strategies or classroom practices. It is important to note that not all teachers were unhappy, dissatisfied, and actively seeking change of employment; however, the pulse of the group of participants in this



study indicated that cognitive mechanisms were in place to ameliorate their personal teaching situations and strengthen their feelings of effectiveness by changing their teaching situations.

This chapter has discussed the contextual factors that influenced high school Spanish teachers' sense of efficacy. Factors were identified and described based on Bronfenbrenner's (1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1979) ecological approach to educational research as applied to teachers' sense of efficacy research (Ashton & Webb, in press; Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983). Factors were discussed in terms of four systems to classify, interrelate, and analyze settings, relationships, and structures that affect teachers in their work. Teachers identified factors in all four systems that they believed influenced their effectiveness. The next chapter presents conclusions drawn based on these findings and implications for the research community and practitioners.

## CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### Introduction

Factors in the context of teaching influence teachers' sense of efficacy, their judgment of their capability to perform successfully in the workplace. This chapter presents a summary of the research problem and discusses conclusions drawn based on the findings of this study--the identification, description, and analysis of contextual factors that high school Spanish teachers believed influenced their sense of effectiveness. The relationship of the findings to previous studies is discussed and implications for researchers and practitioners are noted.

### Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to identify, describe, and analyze contextual factors that high school Spanish teachers believed influenced their sense of efficacy. Research on observed teacher behavior has suggested that teachers who produce greater learning gains accept the responsibility for teaching, believe they are capable of teaching successfully, and believe students are

capable of learning (Good & Brophy, 1984). Research has also shown that factors in the context of teaching influence teachers' sense of efficacy, their judgment of their capability to perform in the workplace (Ashton & Webb, in press; Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983). In the present study teachers' perceptions of factors that helped and hindered their effectiveness were ascertained from an interactionist perspective (Blumer, 1969). Factors, once identified, were described as influences on teachers' sense of efficacy and possible future performance.

Three questions guided the study:

1. How do high school Spanish teachers describe their teaching situation and workplace?
2. What are the contextual factors that high school Spanish teachers believe help and hinder their success in teaching in their teaching situation and current workplace?
3. How do high school Spanish teachers judge their capability to perform in their current position?

In order to identify these factors, the researcher collected data by means of Spradley's (1979) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) and a model developed in a pilot study of basic skills teachers' sense of efficacy (McNeely, 1984). The ethnographic interview method was used to collect, analyze, and interpret data during the 1984-85 school year in a southeastern school district. The total

population of 20 high school Spanish teachers in the public school district participated in the study. The researcher personally conducted in-depth and follow-up interviews of each participant, audiotaped conversations, and recorded field notes and journal notes.

Audiotaped data were transcribed and organized into domains (categories that contain related information). For instance, data drawn from domains such as Kinds of Factors in Classrooms, Kinds of Factors in Schools, and Ways Teachers Cope were used to form taxonomies representing contextual factors. Teachers identified factors in the four areas described by Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) as applied to teachers' sense of efficacy (Ashton & Webb, in press; Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983). The following factors were identified and conclusions drawn.

#### Microsystem Factors

Teachers identified several contextual factors in the microsystem, the immediate classroom and school setting, including class size; number and type of preparations; combined age, grade, and ability levels; combined language levels; degree of lesson continuity; and student success. In addition, teachers cited the availability of one classroom, the physical condition of the room and school, and teachers' perceived role in the immediate settings as influences on their sense of efficacy.

Single isolated factors did not account for overall feeling of efficacy although factors such as class size and availability of one classroom were cited as more influential than other factors. Rather the interaction of factors and the meaning they had for participants influenced teachers' feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction.

#### Mesosystem Factors

Teachers identified factors in several interrelationships that were important to their sense of competence and effectiveness. These included expected teacher behaviors, such as "floating"; relationships with students, colleagues, principals, and other administrative personnel, and teacher autonomy.

#### Exosystem Factors

Factors were identified as part of formal and informal social structures that influenced teachers in their immediate settings. These factors include effects of decisions regarding school district personnel and curriculum, and state and national educational policies that teachers perceived as affecting their professional status.

#### Macrosystem Factors

America's cultural traditions, such as emphasis on English-language monolingualism, and popular attitudes about the Spanish language and culture, were identified as

factors that influenced teachers' sense of efficacy in addition to learner characteristics that developed in traditional American culture. These factors were seen as attributes of the role of foreign language teachers toward dissipelling ethnocentrism in America.

All of the participants in this study identified factors in all four systems (the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems) but none identified all factors. The majority of teachers did, however, identify the factors of class size; combined age, grade, ability, and language levels; availability of one classroom; collegial and principal relations; teacher status, evaluation, and autonomy as more important to their sense of efficacy than other factors. When asked about how they knew they were effective, teachers responded generally in two ways. First, they reported that when students succeed either academically by speaking Spanish or performing well on written tests, or emotionally by showing an increase in maturity or problem-solving skills, teachers felt effective. Second, teachers reported that they had been successful in other school districts under more favorable conditions and were confident of their potential for future performance under similar conditions.

To summarize, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The origin of teachers' sense of inefficacy may be attributed to interacting contextual factors.

2. Teachers' sense of efficacy is situation-specific.
3. Teachers' sense of efficacy is subject-related.
4. Teachers' sense of efficacy may be strengthened by supportive and positive school relations, particularly student, collegial, and principal relations.
5. Teachers possessed the characteristics of highly efficacious people but felt their efforts were thwarted by the sociocultural context in which they taught.
6. Teachers with highly efficacious characteristics directed their coping strategies toward changing their teaching situations rather than adjusting to current conditions.

#### Relationship of Findings to Previous Studies

Research on teachers' sense of efficacy is beginning to evolve; however, few studies exist. The major study to date, that of Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983), has provided a conceptual framework for this study. In past research on teachers and teacher motivation and effectiveness, some conclusions have been drawn based on attitude questionnaires and observation instruments. Studies have provided insight into factors in the context of teaching that influence teachers' feelings of effectiveness such as principal relations (Bloland & Selby, 1980; Nicholson & Tracy, 1982), class size (Glass & Smith, 1979), and student

characteristics (Good & Grouws, 1979). Metz (1978) and H. Cooper, Burger, and Seymour (1979) suggested that the specific teaching situation influences teachers' perceptions of their performance and effectiveness. Few studies, however, have investigated teachers' sense of efficacy in the context of teaching incorporating a naturalistic, interactionist research perspective. The first such study (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983) investigated basic skills teachers' sense of efficacy drawing also on the work of others (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977). Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) identified five major conditions that contribute to teachers' sense of efficacy and professional self-worth: lack of economic rewards, role overload, uncertainty, isolation, and powerlessness. With the exception of the condition of isolation, the findings of the present study confirm their results. Strong collegial relations and other professional support may account for participants' strong sense of professional camaraderie.

It was noted (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983) that a major influence on teachers' sense of efficacy is the uncertainty teachers feel about whether they have an effect on student learning. Because of the subject-specific nature of the present study, this phenomenon could be verified relative to foreign language teachers. In the majority of instances, participants in this study reported that they



could measure their effectiveness by students' performance, specifically oral performance and aural comprehension.

Also in the present study participants' proposed recommendations for problem-solving relative to factors they identified as hindrances to their sense of efficacy as teachers. Many were knowledgeable about current research results supporting their recommendations. Ashton, Webb, and Doda (1983) found that teachers offered few solutions for problems and were generally unreflective about their work, confirming Lortie's (1975) observations.

The present study adds depth and breadth to the existing body of research by including qualitative data on high school Spanish teachers and their perceptions of their motivation and effectiveness as teachers. This study yielded extensive details about factors in the context of teaching called for in previous studies (Ashton, Webb, & Doda, 1983; Denham & Michael, 1981; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). It provided rich, thick descriptions from which hypotheses may be generated and tested toward theory building.

#### Implications for the Research Community

Researchers interested in teachers' sense of efficacy, particularly regarding the teaching of foreign language in high school settings, may use the findings of this study in at least two ways. First, the detailed descriptions of specific factors interacting in the context of teaching

revealed additional areas in need of further investigation and additional questions to be addressed. Second, the study illustrates the use of a qualitative, ethnographic methodology based on an ecological framework, a relatively recent perspective in educational research. These implications for the research community are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Several questions are suggested by this study. Persistent questions for the researcher throughout the investigation concerned other dimensions of the sense of efficacy construct as well as teachers' feelings of effectiveness: What other variables influence sense of efficacy such as age, sex, race, first language, experience, training, career stage, career aspirations, career options, cultural heritage, personal circumstances, self-concept, and ethnic background? Do high school foreign language teachers, who are sometimes certified to teach in other subject areas, have the same sense of effectiveness teaching other subjects? What changes in teacher training could strengthen teachers' sense of efficacy? What differentiated Spanish teachers' sense of effectiveness from that of basic skills teachers? Are there general teacher personality characteristics that make caring, empathetic teachers more vulnerable and unassertive in a bureaucratized system? Although some of the data

collected bore on these questions, additional studies are needed to clarify the issues surrounding the construct.

Additional questions are more specific: Do native Spanish-speaking teachers have different perceptions of the contextual factors that they believe influence their sense of efficacy than non-native Spanish-speaking teachers? What is the relationship of teachers' sense of efficacy to job satisfaction and career decisions? (a question also raised by Hackett and Betz, 1981). How does part-time teaching compare with full-time teaching? These questions and many more arose as the study progressed and provide a source of focus for further consideration.

A second implication for the research community concerns the use of a qualitative research perspective in educational research. Characteristic of qualitative research is the discovery of additional areas that have bearing on the research questions. The findings in the present study revealed that teachers' sense of efficacy is related to many factors in the context of teaching including factors in classrooms, schools, professional relationships, school district, state, and overall American culture. Previous studies have examined some of these factors relative to teacher and school effectiveness. Findings of this study reveal that the interaction of many factors in situation- and subject-specific contexts influence teacher motivation and perceived performance.

Further research must accommodate the factors in this interaction by examining the total ecology in which teaching and learning take place. Research of this nature is time- and labor-intensive, but as these findings demonstrate, it better illuminates "what goes on in our schools" (Goodlad, 1977, p. 3) and what teachers perceive to be important to a high sense of efficacy.

### Implications for Practitioners

Although the present study focused on perceptions of high school Spanish teachers in one southeastern school district and as such may not be generalized to all settings, the findings have important implications for a wide audience including classroom teachers, principals and other administrators, and teacher educators.

In the present study, the participants themselves described the cathartic and beneficial effects of having a forum in which they might air their concerns and examine their own teaching situations. Contrary to some research findings, these participants were highly cognizant of their work practices and reflective about their own sense of effectiveness and motivation as many of the excerpts in chapter IV illustrate. Bolster noted, "There is direct evidence in the analysis of taped conversations with investigators that those teachers who participate in [interactionist, ethnographic] research tend to develop a more differentiated and reflective view of their teaching"

(1983, p. 306). Bolster further suggests that traditional research paradigms designed to evaluate and improve teachers' effectiveness by identifying specific teacher behaviors have contributed to teachers' anxiety and resistance to formal inquiry. Methodologies and research findings that are not only intelligible to teachers but that also view teaching practices from a context-specific, ecological perspective offer one way to bridge the gap between researcher and teacher. They have the potential of offering a way for teachers to see themselves and understand their teaching better as a result.

There are also implications for school principals and other administrators who have control over many of the actual conditions of the workplace and circumstances of teaching. Teacher education literature has consistently supported the importance of (a) teaching as a teacher's primary responsibility, (b) teachers' participation in school decision-making, and (c) the overall improvement of teaching conditions (National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education, 1985). Principals have a key role in implementing policies and procedures that affect teachers in these areas (Crowson & Porter-Gehrie, 1980; Wolcott, 1973). Teachers in the present study identified specific ways that relationships with principals and other school administrators affect their sense of efficacy and the importance of these relationships in comparison with other

contextual factors. Supportive links are vital to teacher effectiveness.

For teacher educators, the present study has additional implications. Ashton and Webb (in press) have noted that study of teachers' sense of efficacy could be efficiently conducted as student teachers progress through their professional learning programs. Teacher trainees' sense of efficacy could be initially assessed and reassessed after specific experiences according to the three dimensions of self-efficacy described by Bandura (1977a): (a) magnitude (the difficulty of the task), (b) generality (the scope of expectations), and (c) strength (degree of perseverance). In addition, teachers trained to analyze the specifics of their own teaching situations would be better able to identify the source of inefficacy and choose coping strategies that would benefit their students and themselves (Bolster, 1983).

Another implications for teacher education is the consideration of additional training that would increase teachers' feelings of effectiveness particularly in classrooms where combined age, grade, ability, and language levels exist, such as foreign language classrooms. As findings in the present study indicate, teachers who had received training in counselor education felt a high sense of efficacy. Learning to understand the importance of the "helping relationship" defined by Rogers as

a relationship in which at least one of the parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, [and] improved coping with life of the other (1958, p. 6)

can serve to bolster teachers' determination and increase their coping alternatives. This training is especially applicable in teaching situations where it is important to know how to help. For instance, Henderson (1979) has noted that many minority students do not appear to want to be helped by teachers and counselors but in actuality are afraid. Teachers must be aware of students' subtle pleas that sometimes take the form of acting out or resisting help. Teacher educators can help shape perseverance attitudes in teacher trainees--only one of many skills that training in counselor education can provide. According to Dewey, "Lack of understanding of human nature is the primary cause of disregard for it" (1922, p. 3).

Multicultural teacher education is another area of training that would benefit teachers by broadening their world view. According to Doda, "World view refers to the system of beliefs, attitudes, and explanations teachers use in conducting and evaluating their professional lives" (1982, p. 2). Learning the importance of accepting students' cultural values and beliefs may contribute to enhancing teachers' sense of efficacy by providing a philosophical vehicle to reach students. Teachers'

expanded world view may also influence students' attitudes and acceptance of all cultures. Research has shown that student teachers' perceptions of ethnic groups can be changed through multicultural education (Baker, 1973); reports have stressed that training in this area is important in making education relevant to all children (Baptiste, Baptiste, & Dollnick, 1980; President's Commission on Foreign Language & International Studies, 1979). Teachers are needed who are sensitive to students of all cultures, to the relativity of values, and to similarities and differences among students. Teachers who can be trained in these high efficacy attitudes will have a greater chance of influencing student achievement and simultaneously increasing their sense of efficacy as teachers.

#### Summary

The contribution of this study to research on teachers and teacher effectiveness stems from its focus on teachers' perceptions of their behaviors and attitudes. Many factors in the context of teaching influence teachers' sense of efficacy and teachers are aware of the effects of these factors on their performance as teachers. Implications for researchers and practitioners have emerged from this study. Recommendations for strengthening teachers' sense of efficacy apply not only to research and teacher training communities but also to teachers themselves.



This study raises more questions than it answers; a goal of generating questions was reached. Future research on teachers' sense of efficacy will continue to elaborate the theoretical framework of the construct and bring about a clearer understanding of teachers and their profession.

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APPENDIX A  
PROJECT OUTLINE

I. Guiding Questions for Study

- A. How do high school foreign language teachers describe their teaching situation and workplace?
- B. What are the contextual factors that high school foreign language teachers believe help and hinder their success in teaching in their current teaching situation and workplace?
- C. How do high school foreign language teachers judge their capability to perform in their current position?

II. Methods

- A. Ethnographic interviewing of high school Spanish teachers and informal interviewing of key school district personnel.
- B. Audiotaping, transcribing, and ethnographically analyzing interview data.
- C. Recording, transcribing, and analyzing field notes.
- D. Recording and reading journal notes.
- E. Collecting archives documenting sociocultural context in which study was conducted.

III. Subject Area, Setting, and Participants

Twenty high school Spanish teachers in one southeastern school district during the 1984-85 school year.

IV. Role of Researcher

- A. Interviewer of participants and key personnel
- B. Implementer of research model.

April 30, 1985

APPENDIX B  
DATA COLLECTION ITEMS

Appendix B contains the items used in the collection of data:

1. description of the study for participants,
2. format for recording participant and interview information,
3. sample interview questions,
4. protocol transcription form,
5. format for recording field notes,
6. field notes transcription form,
7. sample of field notes transcription, and
8. sample of audiotaped raw data transcription.

### Description of the Study for Participants

My name is Sharon McNeely. I am a graduate student in foreign language education and am conducting research on teaching Spanish in high schools. The supervisor of the district foreign language education program indicated that you may be willing to talk with me about your teaching experiences and the factors that you believe influence your effectiveness as a teacher. Would you be willing to talk with me at a time of your convenience?

I would like to audiotape our conversation, but your comments will be kept confidential and your identity and school will be known only by me.

Format for Recording Participant and  
Interview Information

Informant Code Number \_\_\_\_\_

Protocol Number \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date Contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Results \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interview Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Recontacted \_\_\_\_\_

Results \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tape Transcribed \_\_\_\_\_



Sample Interview Questions

What is a typical day like for you at school?

What is your daily schedule?

What kinds of things make it difficult for you to be effective?

What kinds of things help you feel effective?

Will you describe a particularly difficult situation you have had this year teaching Spanish? How did you deal with it?

Would you say that if you really try hard, you can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students? What factors get in the way of your being effective?

What do you like about teaching here?

What do you dislike about teaching here?

Do you believe you have a positive effect on student achievement?

If you could start again, would you choose teaching? Why? Why not?

How could you feel more effective?

What professional concerns do you have?

How would you change things if you could?

Are you able to teach the levels you prefer?

Is there anything you would like to comment on that I have not asked?

Protocol Transcription Form

page \_\_\_\_\_

Protocol No. \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Format for Recording Field Notes

Date, time, place, and length of interview

Description of arrival at interview site

Atmosphere of interview site

Presence of other people

Obstacles potentially interfering with interview  
proceedings, distractions

Impression of teacher

- My personal impression
- Manner of speaking
- Answered questions directly
- Degree of rapport

Impression that interview accomplished purposes of study

Interview techniques

- Skills, lack of skills
- Questions asked
- Manner of speaking
- Ideas for improvement

Follow-up questions

Field Notes Transcription Form

Protocol No. \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

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Sample of Field Notes TranscriptionProtocol No. 4Page No. 1Participant Code No. 15-N2 Date of interview Wed., 6/12/85

1 I arrived at the teacher's home at 10 a.m. I briefly  
2 described the study again and asked if I could audiotape  
3 our conversation. She agreed and we talked in her living  
4 room for the next two hours. (I have found that inter-  
5 views always last much longer than I expect and I was  
6 prepared today with extra tapes.) The teacher did not  
7 seem anxious to end the interview and I explored as many  
8 areas as possible.

9 During the course of the interview she mentioned the  
10 name of another Spanish teacher whom I might contact and  
11 whose name had not been given to me by the supervisor.  
12 This teacher had been a part-time Spanish teacher this  
13 year and was not returning. I will be sure to contact  
14 her. Another comment made by the teacher again as we  
15 walked to my car at the end of the interview was that  
16 because all foreign language teachers at the school were  
17 "floaters" this year it had been especially difficult  
18 to feel effective.

19 She was very easy to talk with and commented freely  
20 about teaching experiences and personalities this year.

Protocol No. 4Page No. 2Participant Code No. 15-N2 Date of interview Wed., 6/12/85

1 She identified several newspaper articles that had  
2 appeared recently about the status of the teaching profes-  
3 sion. The only problem, a minor one, was that she tended  
4 to dominate the conversation. I simply had to interject  
5 questions or comments in the middle of comments at times.  
6 I was satisfied with the quality and quantity of the data  
7 obtained, but I will contact her again if I have  
8 questions.

Sample of Audiotaped Raw Data Transcriptionpage 1Protocol No. 6Participant Code No. E4Date May 29, 1985

1 T: Now to me if all my students aren't learning to the  
2 maximum of their ability, then I'm not doing quite as  
3 well as I should be doing, but I'm doing the best I  
4 know how right now, under the circumstances and with  
5 my physical limitations of being a human being with  
6 finite limits.

7 R: What are those circumstances?

8 T: First of all, it's very difficult to get students to  
9 do the basic studies that they have to do. You can  
10 only do so much in class in a language. We've  
11 increased the language enrollment in this county by  
12 leaps and bounds this year with the 7th period and  
13 Spanish picked up a lot of students who were not  
14 academically oriented, which should not keep them out  
15 of a language whatsoever. You can certainly work  
16 with students who are not academically oriented in  
17 a language. But we had students who were academi-  
18 cally oriented and willing to progress at a fairly  
19 fast pace in the same classes with students who did  
20 not want to do anything. Then when those who were

page 2Protocol No. 6Participant Code No. E4Date May 29, 1985

1 not doing anything began to totally disintegrate  
2 and be unable to do anything they, of course, became  
3 very upset about being in class where they could not  
4 succeed. And a lot of them are still in the class  
5 because there was no place for them to go. At  
6 midterm you could flunk the first semester, you  
7 stayed for the second semester after having flunked  
8 the first semester. Now teachers offered to draw  
9 straws, short straws meant you do it, take a  
10 beginning language class and start over immediately  
11 with those in January who had flunked the term  
12 beginning August. And we were not allowed to do  
13 this.

14 R: Why weren't you allowed to do that?

15 T: Well we . . . don't ask me. Our department  
16 chairman went to the principal and said,  
17 "Earlier, we discussed this in language meetings--  
18 very early--that if we had a large number of students  
19 who failed first semester, we would like to let them  
20 start over again second semester," but we were not  
21 allowed to do this. The administration would not  
22 permit it.



## APPENDIX C DATA ANALYSIS ITEMS

The items in Appendix C are samples of tools used to analyze the data:

1. a domain analysis worksheet,
2. a sample of domain analysis, and
3. taxonomy of contextual factors.



Sample of Domain AnalysisKind of semantic relationship Strict inclusion

<u>Location in protocol</u>			<u>Included terms</u>	<u>Cover term</u>
<u>protocol #</u>	<u>page</u>	<u>line</u>		
<u>1-E1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>class size</u>	
<u>15-N2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>16</u>		
<u>6-E4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>27</u>		micro-
<u>11-B3</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>22</u>		system
<u>14-B5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>20</u>		factor
<u>16-H1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>		
<u>3-E2</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>2</u>		
<u>10-S1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>23</u>		
<u>7-B1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>		
<u>8-B2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>		
<u>13-S2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>18</u>		
<u>17-N3</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>1</u>		
<u>9-G2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>		
<u>12-B4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>20</u>		
<u>18-N4</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>2</u>		
<u>19-G3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>15</u>		
<u>3-E2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>no. of preparations</u>	
<u>18-N4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>		
<u>1-E1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>		

STRUCTURAL QUESTIONS What do teachers mean by "too large"?How many?

## Taxonomy of Contextual Factors

### Microsystem Factors

#### The nature of classes

- class size
- number and type of preparations
- combined age, grade, and ability levels
- combined language levels
- degree of lesson continuity
- student success

#### The nature of the physical setting

- classroom
- conditions of the classroom, school, and furnishings

#### Teacher role definition

- teacher definitions
- other definitions

### Mesosystem Factors

#### School norms

- "floating"
- additional responsibilities

#### School relations

- student and parent relations
- collegial relations
- principal and other administrative relations

#### Decision-making structures

- class assignments
- student placement
- curriculum matters
- problem-solving

### Exosystem Factors

#### The nature of the school district and state

- personnel
- curriculum
- professional status

#### The nature of education in the United States

- the American system and reform
- teacher training

### Macrosystem Factors

#### The role of foreign language in American education

- monolingualism
- American cultural attitudes

#### The nature of the learner in foreign language

- classrooms
- societal changes and student behavior
- student effort


## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sharon Nichols McNeely is a 1965 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received the Bachelor of Arts in Education degree majoring in Spanish and French education. Her professional career in the field of education includes teaching Spanish and French in public and private institutions in the United States at all levels of schooling. She has also held teaching and administrative positions abroad.


In 1991 she received the Master of Education degree from the University of Florida where she was a Title VII Bilingual Fellow majoring in instruction and curriculum and specializing in foreign language, bilingual-multicultural education. She has served as district bilingual advisory board representative and as foreign language volunteer in public schools.

She holds membership in Pi Lambda Theta and Kappa Delta Pi education honor societies as well as several other professional organizations. Ms. McNeely has published in the area of teaching cultural awareness in schools.

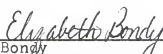
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
C. L. Hallman, Chairperson  
Professor of Instruction and  
Curriculum

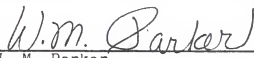
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P. T. Ashton  
Associate Professor of  
Foundations of Education

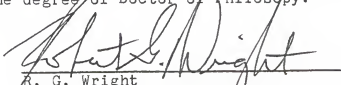
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E. Bondy  
Assistant Professor of  
Instruction and Curriculum

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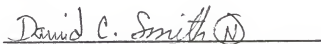
  
W. M. Parker  
Professor of Counselor Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December, 1985

  
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